

F  
129  
M 63 139

Mexico, N.Y.  
"

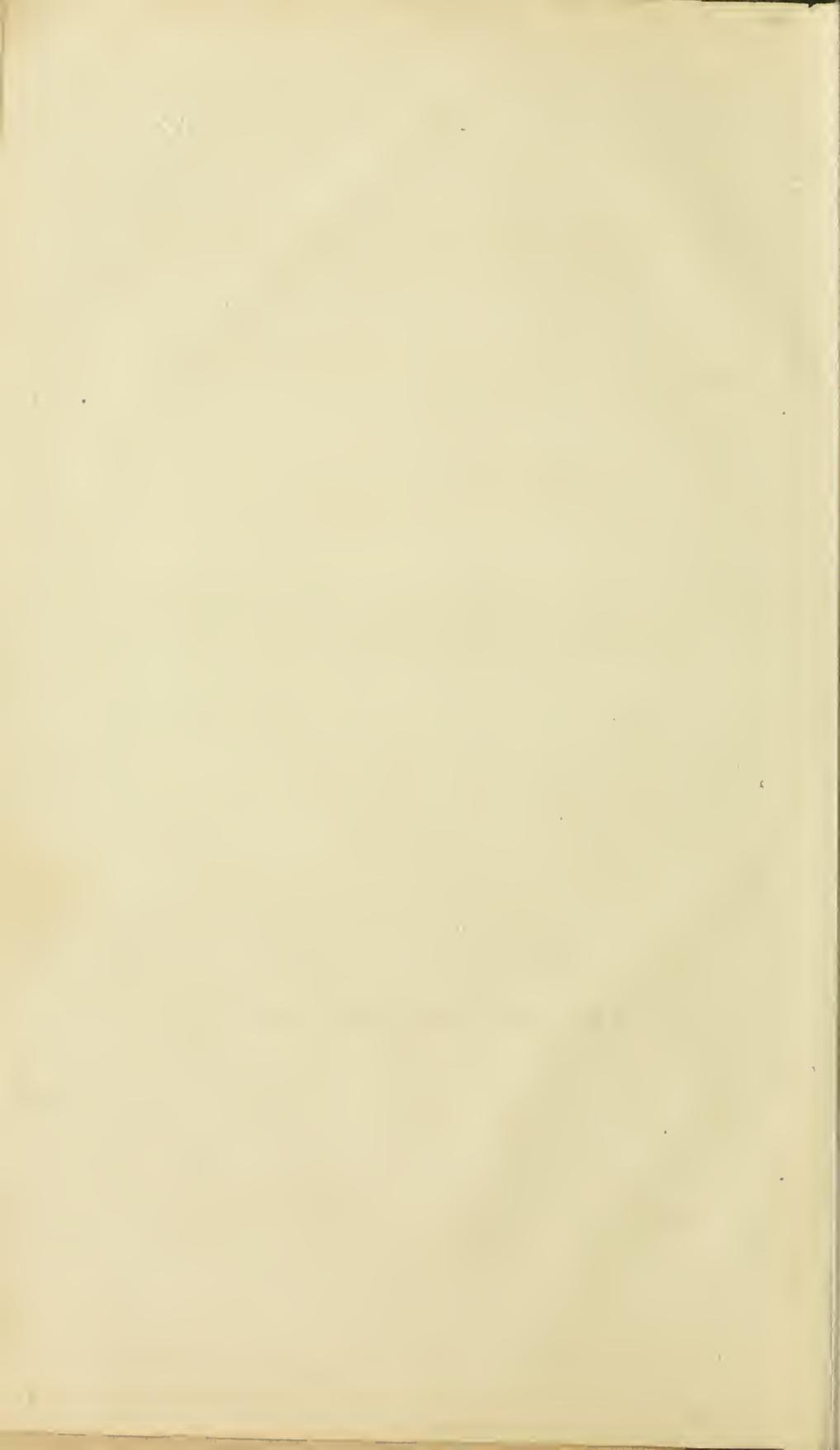
The Old  
Pratham Church



Class F 129

Book M 63 B9

THE  
Old Prayham Church,  
WITH INCIDENTS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF  
MEXICO, N. Y.



THE  
OLD PRATHAM CHURCH.  
WITH INCIDENTS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF  
MEXICO, N. Y.

A SERMON DELIVERED BY REV. A. PARKE BURGESS,  
IN PRATTVILLE AND MEXICO, AUGUST 27, 1876.

“How often have I loitered o'er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !  
How often have I paused on every charm—  
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,  
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
The decent church that topped the neighboring hill.”

*Goldsmith's Deserted Village.*

“THE FATHERS--WHERE ARE THEY?”

---

PRINTED AT 45 JEFFERSON STREET,  
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

1877.

FEB  
MAB

#### P A S T O R S .

DAVID R. DIXON, 1818 to 1833.  
WM. B. STOWE, 1833 to 1836.  
JOHN L. MARVIN, 1840 to 1843.  
EZRA SCOVILLE, 1843 to 1853.  
RALPH ROBINSON, 1853 to 1857.

#### D E A C O N S .

E. GATES.	WM. A. DAVIS.
THOMAS ROOT.	WM. S. TUBBS.
JOHN BECKER.	GATES MILLER.
ELIAS BREWSTER.	L. P. HALL.

#### E L D E R S .

EPHRAIM GATES.	CHESTER HOLCOMB.
DANIEL LOCKE.	MARTIN P. KELLOGG.
EDMUND WHEELER.	JOHN MILLER.
SHUBAL ALFRED.	ARCHIBALD GARRISON.
LEVI MATTHEWS.	ELIAS BREWSTER.
JABIN WOOD.	WILLIAM. A. DAVIS.
THOMAS ROOT.	GATES MILLER,
JOHN BECKER.	WILLIAM S. TUBBS.

#### P R E F A C E .

The task of preparing and afterwards amplifying this sketch has not been slight; and yet it has been agreeable. I only regret its imperfections and omissions. Gladly would I have gathered up the personal histories of many whom I have been compelled to pass in silence. I wish to acknowledge the valuable aid of many friends; Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Stone, George R. Slack, Col. Hosmer, numerous correspondents, and several citizens of Prattville, but for whose help the work would have been impossible.

412474

A. P. B.

31

# HISTORICAL SERMON.

PRATTVILLE, N. Y.

1876.

TEXT.

“And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the Lord.” Num. xxxiii : 2.

## INTRODUCTORY WORDS.

History is a running commentary upon the government of God. It is an exegesis upon his providences; a revelation of his purposes; a demonstration of the truth of his word. “God in history,” is a devout sentiment, in the light of which all history becomes more suggestive and more valuable. Thus considered, it enables us to trace the footsteps of God among men, and affords us data from which to forecast the future. What has been shall be; good or ill, in time to come, will follow upon the same occasions out of which they have arisen in the past. God’s administration is not capricious. As he did yesterday, so he will do to-morrow. The paths in which generations have gone, up or down, are the paths in which other generations shall go. History, therefore, sets guide-boards, and shows us mystical fingers, pointing out roads for men, along the stages of life. It erects signal-stations on hill-tops and shores. It tells us when and where we may expect clouds and storms; and unfolds to us the atmospheric and

isothermal laws of the moral world. It contradicts Atheism, and silences the fool who says "there is no God." The history of a past age, is the "old probabilities" of the present, and enables us to foresee the dangerous seas, and rocks, and shores of to-morrow.

History is, therefore, important; and should be carefully written by each generation for the instruction and counsel of the next. When events are transpiring, if of any value to anybody, now or hereafter, they should be snatched from the current that would soon bear them into forgetfulness, and put into forms of permanent preservation; as we love to do with the faces of our friends, by placing them in our albums, before the undertaker places them beneath the sod. No more should historical treasures be left to the custody of memory, than should the dear, sweet features of our departing loved ones. What is worth knowing, and telling, and remembering is worth writing out. If the history of your community affords any lessons, write them. If the annals of your Church are of any consequence to the future, give them record. If your own life is of any significance, keep a diary.

Research would have more of fascination, and less of tiresome perplexity, had daily transpirings been properly dotted down, and facts and changes been noted; for those eclipses which result from neglect to do this are less serious to participants than to the historian who comes afterward, to pick up the dropped stitches of fact and incident, and re-knit the raveled tissue.

There is in anticipation a charm, in the task of exhuming the past, and digging out its buried relics and records, its names and dates and persons and doings; but the charm is dispelled, when we find the story broken in two in the middle, the connection destroyed, valuable data lost beyond recovery through the carelessness of somebody, who died before we were born, and whose ears, therefore, it is impossible for us to reach, with a gentle rebuke.

Still, the task of resurrecting from a past era that which is

too precious to remain buried with it, is not so great as the blessing which lies underneath that task.

While regretting the meagerness and incompleteness of the following sketch, from which many things have been left out that it would have been pleasant to weave into it, I can assure you no labor has afforded me more pensive enjoyment than this, which has brought to life again the good, the venerable, the holy, who, though dead, are yet eloquently speaking to us.

“IN THE BEGINNING.”

How this once forest-burdened region came to be found out and settled at-all, is a question that must be answered by a recurrence to that grand law of adventurous faith which underlies the energies of men, prompted by which they are ever in quest of something better. There was a people who declared plainly that they desired “a better country, that is, an heavenly,” and God was not ashamed to be called the God of such a people.

He never rebukes, in the human breast, that emulation by which we lawfully strive to rise to better conditions, and welcome risk and toil, in hope of an inheritance correspondingly improved.

Vitalized by this spirit, civilization is a cosmopolite. It takes its way westward, because there is no other-ward it can take.

Obeying this great law of uneasiness which makes universal man, in his more primitive conditions a migratory animal, there were men—companies, and colonies, armies and squads of them, who, more than two centuries ago, began, for the sake of empire, or conquest, or trade, or war, or adventure, or settlement, to straggle through these forests, along these streams, and by the zigzag shores of these lakes. More than two hundred years ago, this region, with which we are wont to associate little that is classic or romantic, was military ground, and in the dim beginnings of its history it was dignified as the theatre of “the old French war,” the legends of which are still lingering around old Fort Ontario, and other fortifications of the

French and the English, between whom these trading posts and frontier defenses became the bone of greedy and protracted contentions.

Finally neither English nor French could withstand the persistent and ubiquitous Yankee, and New England succeeded in getting her full share of the bone, and the meat that was on it.

In 1790, a German merchant, from New York, by the name of Scriba, purchased of the Government, at sixteen cents per acre, the patch of five hundred thousand acres, covering what is now Oswego and part of Oneida County, and fixed for his head-quarters, a sort of capital of his forest empire, at what is now Constantia; and true to his love of Fatherland, he named his young emporium "Rotterdam."

From Oneida County, and the farther east, toward the close of the last century, and at the beginning of the present, people commenced to push outward through this Rotterdam settlement, which served as a sort of way-station, toward Lake Ontario, and the military and trading-post which has since grown into the city of Oswego.

Mexico was then a town of Herkimer County, and in its territorial limits enjoyed no mean proportions; as it included most of the present counties of Oswego, Jefferson, and Lewis, and a portion of Oneida.

Speaking of it in botanical phrase, we may say it was then a mammoth pod—a capsule, from which were shelled out, one by one, the following seeds; Camden in 1799, Champion, Redfield, Turin, Watertown and Lowville in 1800, Adams in 1802, Lorraine and Williamstown in 1804, Volney in 1806, Constantia in 1808, New Heaven in 1813, and Parish in 1828—the latter town having yet two years in which to prepare for its semi-centennial celebration.

Vera Cruz, an ideal metropolis on the lake shore, became, at this early day, a rival of Utica and Oswego; having a saw-mill, a grist-mill, and a store, with an active lake trade and many auspices of future growth. A street, we are told, was

laid out by the agent of Mr. Scriba, from the beach, up Little Salmon River, to what is now Texas Village.

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, Silas Town, a spy in the employment of General Washington many years preceding, a New Englander, and an heir of fortune by birth, but around whose early history there hangs much of the sweet, sad haze of romance in which love and disappointment, as in many other instances, half reveal the "truth that is stranger than fiction," came to the sequestered shades of the tall chestnut forest that skirted the lake, and chose for his abode and burial-place an island, now marked as the home of his ashes, by a monument erected in 1871 to his name. On this island he lived the last years of his life, in musing solitude.

A man is of very appreciable value, in a community whose men may all be counted upon the finger-ends; and such was the state of this shore-settlement, when, in 1799 a boat was capsized, and Captain Geerman with six others were lost; and by a similar accident in 1804, nine more found a watery grave. But for these casualties, Mexicoville and Prattville might alike have been, to-day, only suburban portions of the wide-spreading city of Vera Cruz; but with only one adult man left in the settlement its growth had to wait till it waited too long.

Annals respecting the first population of the territory now embraced in the town of Mexico, are quite imperfect. The names of many first-settlers are lost. About twenty-five persons, we are told, had become dwellers here prior to 1798. Samuel Everts and his family came in 1804, and took up the farm which has continued in the possession of his heirs, and, with a vestige of the old house still standing upon it, is well known as "uncle Walter Evarts' farm."

In 1804 "Esquire Hamilton" was living in a log-house on the farm known as the "Lamb farm," and now owned by Isaac Burlingham. Calvin Tiffany, whose house was a nucleus for the beginnings of Church history as well as that of schools, in the town, had settled near the stream under the hill, just east

of the old "Primitive Cemetery," in 1799; and in 1801 Asa Davis, whose grandson and namesake, son of B. D. Davis, fell a soldier at New Orleans, located on the place where the latter now resides. John Morton, whose brother's wife, Luna, a member of the Church, complained to Shubal Alfred because his girls were allowed to dance, came also in 1801.

In the spring of 1804, Martin Kellogg came to take possession of a place adjoining Peter Pratt's subsequent farm, and spent several months clearing land and getting in crops, boarding with "Esq. Hamilton," and brought his family on in 1805. In the same year came to this neighborhood Peter Pratt, Noah Smith, and Joel Savage.

The history of Joel Savage is one of quite romantic interest, and may as well be rescued from oblivion, by a brief recital in this connection. He was born in Middleton, Conn., in 1761. At the age of nineteen he enlisted in the army of his country, the war of American Independence having commenced. After enduring the hardships of a soldier's life about three years, while marching up the Mohawk Valley with a company of comrades, *en route* for Fort Stanwix, an encounter with Indians took place, in which all were murdered but Savage and a Mr. Colton. They, displaying great bravery and strength, by slaying some of the red-skins, were magnanimously spared for their prowess, and taken on by the Indians to Fort Brewerton, where they by running the gauntlet escaped, and were taken prisoners by the British and carried to Canada, where Savage was kept till the close of the war, fifteen months, and then being liberated, repaired to the home of his parents, in Canaan Columbia county. There he was married to Abigail Smith and moved to Whitestown, whence, in a few years, he removed to Mexico, as already stated.

These people came into the Pratham valley, and began, in an unbroken wilderness, to remove the timber from a little land, so as, with fish and game, to provision themselves for the ensuing season. Subsequently crops became abundant. But, without roads, or mills, it was not always easy to convert

wheat into bread, or corn into johnny-cake. Grists were carried on horse-back to Camden, and in one of the hard winters, when the snow was so deep that tunnels were dug through it for paths, pestle and mortar had to take the place of the grist mill.

Col. Sherman Hosmer, now the only surviving member of the early settlement, tells of going through an unbroken forest to Oswego Falls, near Fulton, with a small company of young ladies and gentlemen, on foot and on horseback, to attend a ball. The ladies carried their "finery," and put it on after arriving at the place.

These pioneers of the Prattville society were men of breadth and enterprise, as well as of sturdy moral principle. They began early to lay foundations for industry, wealth and growth. Anticipating even the west neighborhood, which afterward, owing to better natural helps, became the center of population and business, this East Mexico settlement began to foster the cause of religion, education, and material development.

A woolen factory was conducted by Peter Pratt, Elias Brewster and Dr. Sardius Brewster. Peter Pratt erected the first saw-mill and distillery, and was a partner with Elias Brewster in the first variety store and tin shop. Joel Savage kept the first tavern, on the corner where Edward Halsey now lives, and his family spread out on a square mile or more of the country north and west from his house. They were nearly all members of the Church. Edward Smith established the first tannery and harness shop, on the stream east of Prattville Corners, and Simon Leroy the first cabinet shop. George Finney, a brother of the celebrated evangelist and President of Oberlin College, Charles G. Finney, was the first blacksmith, and in the family of the late Nathaniel Slack a pair of large tongs, that have never "lost their cunning," still remain to show the strength of his right arm and the honesty of his work. He afterwards became a minister.

The first framed house whose walls were plastered, still remains standing, near the residence of George Wheeler, and a

party of young people who came to the house for a dance, soon after the white mortar had been spread, never having seen the like before, took the plastering to be a screen of white cloth that had been for some purpose hung about the room.

Mr. Smith procured the first stove, and the neighbors thought him unwise, and said it would certainly prove a very unhealthy way of warming the house.

Calvin Tiffany kept a tavern as early as 1810; and the first cemetery, on the hill west of his place, was founded at a very early date, Mr. Scriba having given the land therefor, and Samuel Cole, who died in January, 1809, father of Rev. Samuel Cole, was the first fruit of the harvest of death, gathered in its now sacred dust. Mr. Cole was a Mason, and buried with Masonic honors. It strikes us as an ungrateful fact, that no stone of any kind has been set up by loving hands, to mark the spot where he sleeps. It is due to his memory that somebody shall yet reclaim that primitive grave out of the oblivion that begins to hide it from those who tenderly visit the old burying ground.

This was the only cemetery in the town, till 1838. Clarke Beebe was elected in 1821, by the Prattville society, to take charge of this ground, for the ensuing year.

#### THE CHURCH PLANTED.

Not long did the new community neglect "the one thing needful." They had been bred in the love of gospel institutions. Ingrained in their very fibre was an attachment to God's sanctuary, and reverence for his ordinances. They were largely Connecticut people, who had been molded to a form of Godliness, even before induction into a personal knowledge of its power. They had acquired, through a sturdy New England education, a profound sense of religion, as necessary to good society, and an upright life. Though they were not all Christians, yet their theories of political economy and of good breeding, included a well-sustained Church; and in their judgment, the public welfare was largely dependent on what some one has called a "careful discipline of the moral feel-

ings," which only the efficient ministrations of religion can afford. Theirs was the day in which such Statesmen as Judge Story taught that it was the duty of government, even for its own sake, and as necessary to good citizenship and a good education, "to foster and cherish religion among its citizens and subjects."

Hence we find the little colony making haste to lay the foundations of religious training, as they laid the foundations of education and material prosperity in their beginnings here. Theirs was the wise notion that the church and school-house belong side by side. True to this reverent faith, they organized a Church, in 1810; twenty years after Seriba purchased the territory, and four years after Sanford Douglass taught the first School at Colosse. This Church was one of the earliest planted in this whole region of country, and consisted at first of seven women, who had not, till afterward, even one man to lay hold of for deacon or other office of trust or honor. Those Godly and heroic women were: MRS. SHUBAL ALFRED, MRS. MARY WHEELER, MRS. REBECCA MATTHEWS, MRS. SARAH BEEBE, MRS. EUNICE WILLIAMS, MRS. MERRIAM SOUTHWORTH, MRS. HANNAH HOSMER. Very soon afterward, however, there were some of the men who seem to have been moved by Paul's admonition to "help those women;" and we have every reason to reverence them, as having been worthy to head the list of holy women and men, who afterward shone in the ranks of the Church with a steady and commanding light. And, as we pass, may we not say of them, as Paul said of the women, his yoke-fellows, their "names are in the book of life?"

This first Church was of the Congregational order, and was organized in Shubal Alfred's barn, Rev. Simon Waterman, in the employ of the Connecticut Missionary Society, presiding at its formation. In those days of frontier growth, society being on a rapid march westward, missionary enterprize had ample stimulus; and many organizations designed to follow up with the gospel those who overflowed into the wilderness, were from time to time formed. The Connecticut Society was among

these, and was organize in 1798, by the State Congregational Association; six ministers and six laymen being its trustees, and its two-fold object being to "Christianize the heathen of North America, and to support and promote Christian knowledge in the new settlements within the United States." This was the first of the missionary societies that hallowed these grounds with the self-denying toils of their servants; and Waterman, Brainard and Leavitt were among the first of these. Nothing is recorded and little is known of this first Church, save that it was supplied with missionary preaching by such men as Israel Brainard, of Verona, Oliver Leavitt, of Richland,—the first Congregational minister within the bounds of the present county of Oswego,—Mr. Dunlap, a minister from Washington county, who dispensed the gospel and traded in lands, Mr. Waterman, to whom reference was just made, and some others. Israel Brainard took a prominent part in the direction of religious interests in those days, and was one of the first two commissioners from Oneida Presbytery to Auburn Seminary, on the founding of that institution, in 1820.

From the glimpses we obtain of Mr. Brainard, as he sought to organize and direct the work of the Lord all over these newly forming populations, extending his efforts to several counties and for a small salary, amid the primitive rudeness of the country, and the privations and labors incident thereto, we can but be impressed with his earnestness, his zeal, and his talent for leadership and management, in planting and establishing the Church of Christ. To great multitudes, his memory is precious.

I take pleasure in referring here to an article by his daughter, Mrs. G. W. Thompson, in the *Evangelist* of July 6th, 1876, in which she gives a racy account of the removal from Guilford, Connecticut, in 1806, to the "Whitestown Country," making the journey in a "one horse shay," which, at Troy, gave place to a "cart and oxen," by which more reliable than elegant conveyance they finished the pilgrimage,—a trip lasting

some two weeks and varied by "many a lively bonnec," but bringing them in safety finally, to Verona, their intended home.

THE SOCIETY FORMED.

I have spoken of the formation of the Church. Prior to this in 1807, a Baptist Church had been planted in Colosse, and in 1809, in the house of Leonard Ames, the Methodist Church of Mexicoville.

At first the Church only was formed, and this with but the simplest organization. But in May, 1811, "a number of the inhabitants" of Mexico "met at the house of Shubal Alfred, in said town, for the purpose of forming a religious society;" thus began a business organization, to have in charge the temporal affairs of the Church. An organization was adopted under the name of "The First Congregational Society of Mexico." The act of organization under this name was duly recorded according to law. The first trustees, elected at this meeting, were Peter Pratt, whose widow\* still remains living in the town, Barnet Whipple, half-brother of Mrs. Asa Beebe, Sherman Hosmer, the only surviving member of the board, Shubal Alfred, whose descendants are still in our midst, and Calvin Tiffany, who then kept a public house on what has since been known as the Calvin Tiffany place. The first clerk of trustees was John Kingsley, whose daughter, Pleiades Brewster, became the wife of Anson Savage, September 8th, 1830, and by a second marriage is now the wife of Martin Ely, of Mantorville, Minnesota. Kingsley, Hosmer, Whipple and Tiffany never became members of the Church, nor did Pratt till twenty-one years afterward, in 1832. But while these men were not professing Christians, they were efficient supporters and able counselors of the Church, and endowed with moral worth and business talent.

This society is still in existence, and its annual meetings have never lapsed, in this long period of sixty-five years, though for a few years the records are lost. The original records

---

\*Died January, 1877, aged eighty-seven years.

have been preserved in the hands of Colonel Hosmer, and from the first pages I glean the following interesting minutes: "In the summer of 1812, the society paid Rev. Oliver Leavitt for nine Sabbaths, \$45-\$40 by subscription and \$5 by collection;—\$1.25 now in the hands of the trustees."

At the meeting in September, 1813, a letter having been written to Mr. Scriba, "soliciting his aid in procuring a piece of land for the support of a preached gospel in said society," Mr. Scriba's reply was read, which promised, in substance, that the society should have "fifty acres of land, the south part of the north half of lot No. 78, twentieth township of Scriba's patent, on condition that each member of the society shall work, or cause to be worked, three day's labor on the public highway between Rotterdam and the twenty-third town, in one month from date." The terms were accepted, the work promptly done, a deed secured and recorded at a cost of one dollar, Peter Pratt and Calvin Tiffany having served by appointment as a committee to carry out the stipulation, and David S. Bates Esq., to convey to Mr. Scriba the thanks of the society. This 'Rotterdam road' was a highway, twenty miles in length, reaching from Mr. Scriba's head-quarters on Oncida lake to his Utopean city of Vera Cruz, on lake Ontario, where is now the justly pre-eminent point for Sunday-school picnics, to which you are wont to resort. Traces of the old road bed are yet to be seen, a little east of Mexico village, and across the farms of Mrs. Zenas Butterfield and George Sampson, and beyond Colosse it is supposed to have been nearly identical with the road branching to the east, through "Carley's Mills" and West Monroe.

#### S U B S E Q U E N T T R U S T E E S E L E C T E D .

The following are the names of Trustees, who served one or more terms, during the subsequent history of the society, viz: John Kingsley, first elected in 1812; Ephraim Gates, whose daughter Mrs. Oliver, now resides on Paris Hill, and Joel Savage, who died at the age of eighty-one, in Waupun, Wis., March 1875, first elected in 1813; Daniel Locke, who removed

from the town in 1820, and Elias Brewster, prominent in the Church through all its subsequent history, first elected in 1814; Edmund Wheeler, whose descendants are now well known citizens of Mexico, first elected in 1815; Thomas Root, and Dr. Sardius Brewster, first elected in 1816; Dyer Burnham, of whose subsequent history I have not been able to learn, first elected in 1817; James Lamb and Lucius Webb, still represented among us by their descendants, first elected in 1818; Wm. Goit, a name still remaining in the annals of the town, first elected in 1819; Levi Matthews, also known to us by his posterity, first elected in 1821; Luke Butterfield, brother of Zenas Butterfield, and Jabin Wood, venerably known as Deacon Wood, and still living, first elected in 1822; Asa Beebe, now eighty-four years of age, and still living in Mexico, first elected in 1823; Wm. S. Fitch, the first merchant of Mexico village, and Warner Mitchel, first chosen in 1825; Wm. Porter, whose family in part remain in town, first elected in 1829; Dean Tubbs, a few of whose posterity yet remain here, first elected in 1830; Lewis Kellogg, for many years since a well-known Presbyterian minister, first elected in 1831; Samuel Emery, yet distinctly remembered by many, and Wm. S. Tubbs, recently promoted from labor to reward, first elected in 1833; Obed Griffeth, whose name has remained in the annals of the community, first elected in 1834; Nathaniel Slack, whose steady light still shines, though the candlestick has been removed, and Wm. A. Davis, long beloved for his official faithfulness and Christian usefulness, first elected in 1836; Anson Savage, brother of Joel Savage, first elected in 1837; Emelus Williams and Lester Slack, both of fragrant memory, first elected in 1839; Zenas Butterfield, first elected in 1841; George Sampson, surviving in a contented old age, and David C. Scofield, of whose removal to Indiana in 1847 we have a record, first elected in 1844; Asa Davis, elected in 1845; Benjamin D. Davis, now living on the old homestead, first elected in 1846; Milton Byington, who for many years owned the farm early occupied by Mr. Dixon,

the first pastor, first elected in 1847; Linus Hall, elected in 1850; J. D. Clarke, now an efficient member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Prattville, first elected in 1851; A. L. Sampson, elected in 1852; Lester Slack and Shepherd Emery, in 1853; Anson Savage and Joseph P. Slack, in 1854; George Sampson, William A. Davis, William S. Tubbs, (to fill vacancy) in 1855; J. D. Clark, Nathaniel Slack, in 1856; Wm. A. Davis, Lester Slack, in 1857; George Sampson, B. D. Davis, in 1858; A. L. Sampson, Linus P. Hall, in 1859; J. D. Clark, Sherman Hosmer, Wm. S. Tubbs, N. Slack, Milo Williams, (the entire board of trustees having resigned) in 1860; Wm. Halsey, in 1861; B. D. Davis, (to fill vacancy caused by decease of Wm. Halsey) July, 1861; Russel Burlingham, Wm. S. Tubbs, 1862; N. Slack, Truman Goodell, 1863; Loren Miller, 1864; Merwin Avery (to fill vacancy caused by decease of Loren Miller) Isaac Burlingham, W. S. Tubbs, in 1865; J. D. Clark, S. B. Ford, 1866; G. R. Slack, 1867; I. Burlingham, Hiram Webb, 1868; J. D. Clark, S. B. Ford, 1869; I. N. Byington, W. S. Tubbs, (to fill vacancy) 1870; W. S. Tubbs, B. D. Davis, 1871; J. D. Clark, E. N. Hills, 1872; Alfred Burlingham, 1873; I. N. Byington, E. W. Gates, 1874; J. D. Clark, Charles L. Stillman, 1875; Alfred Burlingham, 1876.

#### THE CHURCH RE-ORGANIZED.

Let us go back now, to the earlier days, when Church extension was the animating spirit of both the Congregational bodies of New England, and of the Presbyterians of eastern New York, Long Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Both, as we have seen, had put their missionary zeal into practical operation, by combining to send men to keep abreast the pioneer, and blend the trumpet of the gospel with the resounding stroke of the woodman's axe. They were planning God's work. He had ordained the means and the resources—the faith, and wisdom, and holy zeal, by which His Church should always plant the banner of Christ upon the very outposts of that advancing civilization which, but for his cross,

would never have shed its radiance upon the world. And God had men for his work; men to bear his messages. These holy vanguards of the spiritual conflict, had a faith as heroic as the world's discoverers and conquerors have ever had. With the forecast of a prophetic faculty, their ears turned to the future, they might have said with the poet:

We hear the tread of pioneers;  
Of nations yet to be;  
The first low waves of sound where yet  
Shall roll a human sea.

And where humanity with its on-coming millions pitches its battle and challenges every force on the good or evil side, to the conflict, there it is the glory of Christ to set up his kingdom. Hence, those were spiritually auspicious years in which the Church had its earlier history. During the last half of the eighteenth century, religious interests in America had run very low, revivals had been unfrequent, dearth had prevailed. But now, about the beginning of the present century, hundreds of Churches in New England were visited with gracious revivals; "thousands of souls were translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son;" such fervent souls as that of Nettleton began to groan and pray and labor for the deliverance of the Churches from spiritual blindness and bondage; Dr. Dwight in the maturity of his power, president of Yale College, was making that institution the center of giant intellectual forces, and also of a spiritual energy and power, which impressed not only the young men for life, who were students there, but sent renovating influences out over the land; Judson, Mills, Nott and Newell, the very summer in which this Church was organized, being then students at Andover, appeared before the General Association of Massachusetts, at Bradford, and first formally declared their convictions on the subject of Foreign Missions—a step which, as is well known, led to the organization of the American Board. Thus the birth of this Church was coincident with a general quickening of the Church of Christ in America.

The very spirit of this aggression for Christ was burning in the Churches—the sacred fire of missionary enterprise defying repression, manifesting itself in general and local organizations, in ecclesiastical bodies and individual Churches, among even young men and young women, at the early period of which we are speaking. And it is well that it was so. If these regions, so rapidly populated, had but been filled with a secular, mercenary crowd, who, if ever intent on better things, had left their religion behind them, for the sake of mammon unshared with Christ, then, we would not have enjoyed to-day the heritage, into which the gospel has projected at every point a more precious value, which, as we lift our eyes, we everywhere behold.

But, I was proceeding to say, that, as both the Congregational and Presbyterian bodies were in a co-operative rivalry for those who, in the heterogeneous masses, preferred the Calvinistic faith, it is not surprising that in some instances the Churches became one, and sometimes the other, and sometimes a mixture of both, in their polity and usages. Thus, there came a time when the Church in Mexico, first Congregational, preferred to work under the Presbyterian forms, and unanimously changed its name and organization accordingly. This change was effected in March, 1818; and the reconstructed Church, electing Deacon Ephriam Gates, Daniel Locke, and Edmund Wheeler as elders, put itself under the care of Oneida Presbytery. This was two years after the county of Oswego was formed, and anticipated by five years the formation of the Oswego Presbytery; that having been constituted from Oneida Presbytery in 1823, with originally five ministers.

The Church now being Presbyterian, Rev. David R. Dixon, recently a teacher in the village of Utica, was called by it, and installed by Presbytery as pastor, he having been the acting pastor since the winter of 1814-15. The installation occurred in the early part of 1818, in the unfinished brick hotel standing on ground now occupied by the Mexico Hotel. Rev. Henry Smith, of Camden, preached the sermon, and Revs. Oliver

Ayer and Oliver Leavitt assisted in the service. Mrs. Williams distinctly remembers the occasion, and the text, which was from Ezekiel iii: 17, as follows: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me." Mrs. Williams recalls the sermon as a very impressive one, and it certainly was founded upon a very solemn text.

The first members who joined the Church, after the re-organization, were Simeon Hopson, and Naomi, his wife; and they were from Northfield, Mass., the birth-place and summer home of the world-renowned Evangelist, D. L. Moody. From this time onward, the Church grew, the Lord adding to its numbers during several years at almost every communion, "of such as should be saved."

The Church embraced, territorially, all the region round about, so far as relates to those who adhered to its form of belief. East and West Mexico were its double center, while its right and left flanks reached out to Parish, Richland and the shore. And the East Mexico portion was at that period the stronger; Mr. Dixon's time being given, *pro rata*, two-thirds to that, and one-third to the west section of the society. Mexico village had no more dreamed then of her coming renown, than Prattville had dreamed of her destined decline. In fact, the rivalry which afterward grew uncomfortably sharp, had not then distinctly appeared. The brethren were "of one heart and one mind." The Church was strong; its progress was vigorous; its members were persons of more than mediocre talent, culture, forecast, and worth. The families that gave it character would compare favorably with any then or since, in any portion of the county.

The relative strength of the Church in the Presbytery may be inferred from the fact that for the year 1824, the Churches all contributed for the cause of missions, one hundred and thirty-two dollars, of which the Mexico Church gave forty dollars; and of the one hundred and ten dollars contributed for education by the whole Presbytery, this Church gave

forty-nine dollars, or nearly one-half. In 1825 the missionary collections were forty-one dollars and sixty cents; which was four-sevenths of the amount contributed by the entire Presbytery. For 1830, the year of the separation and the formation of the village Church, some of the Churches in the Presbytery reported as follows: Camden, four hundred and nineteen members, two hundred and eleven dollars and fifty cents for missions, and twenty dollars for Oneida Institute, under the labors of Mr. Smith, who is spoken of as "combining extensive learning, eloquent utterance, and tenderness of heart." So the Camden Church had been greatly prospered; being blessed with "almost constant revival," six hundred—one hundred and twenty at one time,—having been added to the Church, during his pastorate. Mexico, (original Church) one hundred and forty-six members, contributed one hundred and forty-three dollars for missions, and twenty-four dollars for Oneida Institute; Oswego, seventy-nine members, one hundred and ninety-eight dollars and thirty-five cents for missions, and eighty dollars for Oneida Institute; Florenee, sixty-one members, twenty dollars for missions; Mexico village, forty-two members, and thirty-six dollars and nineteen cents for missions. Of other Churches I have not the figures; but then, next to Camden the old Mexico Church was the largest in Presbytery. During the year of the separation, forty-eight left to form the New Church, one died, making forty-nine, and forty-four were added by profession and six by letter, so that the membership after swarming was one more than at the beginning of the year; and had no division occurred, would have been, at the end of the year, one hundred and ninety-four. This is probably the highest membership the old Church ever reached.

#### THE SEPARATION.

It is well known that, owing to circumstances which could not have had other effect, a class of rival interests began early to draw out the local energies of either section, and on all questions of public concernment, the relative strength of the east and the west must needs be tested. Upon the location of

“Rensalaer Oswego Academy,” in 1826, from whose humble beginning has grown into its present honorable rank as an institution, the Mexico Academy, which is just now drawing back to itself the memories and trophies of fifty years of noble service, the inevitable subject of location had to be warmly canvassed, and at one period it seems to have been an almost foregone conclusion that its site would be fixed in the valley between the two sections, where it would in after years have accommodated nobody. But Providence wisely over-ruled by the temporary location of the school in an unoccupied building in the village, the temporary location becoming permanent; and the noble men,—the Brewsters, Skinner and Pratt, with others who had conceived and inaugurated the enterprise, at length very magnanimously yielded, and were ever firm supporters of the School, after it had almost accidentally taken root, where it now stands.

The same considerations on which this question was settled, became the basis of years of intense, but not wholly ungracious controversy, as to the location of a house of worship. Each neighborhood desired to be accommodated. Each had its sacred rights. Before each, so far as either could see, were equal chances for the future. Neither could forecast the growth of one community, or the decadence of the other. True, one enjoyed the best natural advantages for growth, but who supposes they then fully comprehended those advantages? On the other hand, who that has fairly computed the culture, breadth, talent and enterprise of the two communities, shall decide that the preponderance was not on the east side of the “old Rotterdam road?” Howbeit, neither side was willing to surrender to the other; a division came, and its coming was a blessing to each, and to the cause of God, in many ways.

Prior to the separation, and accessory to it, was the question of Church-building. Where to locate the house, has been in more instances than one, a greater puzzle than how to obtain the funds for building it. And it was so now. Over this perplexing puzzle, the erection of a place of worship was de-

layed for years. As early as 1822, at a meeting in the school-house in district No. 7, this action was taken :

1. *Resolved* :—That we build a meeting-house.
2. *Resolved* :—That we choose a committee of ten to fix the site for a meeting-house.
3. *Resolved* :—That Jabin Wood, Peter Pratt, James Lamb, Edmund Mathews, Asa Beebe, John Kingsley, David Williams, Samuel Emery, Dean Tubbs, and Martin D. Kellogg be the committee.

These men could have located a site, if there were men on the earth that could have done it. But they failed. After a good deal of skirmishing around, they gave over the attempt; and at the next annual meeting, 1823, the society adopted two resolves, which have a significance, as they stand, side by side.

1. *Resolved* :—That we circulate a subscription to raise money to pay back interest on Mr. Dixon's land.

2. *Resolved* :—That the vote for building a meeting-house be reconsidered.

There the matter rested, but for a season. At a meeting in Mr. Dixon's barn, April 12, 1824, it was voted that "a committee of three be chosen to fix on a site for a meeting-house for this society." Having had so little success with a committee of their own, they now preferred one from abroad—and a clerical one at that—and Rev. Henry Smith, of Camden, Rev. Oliver Ayers, of Richland, Rev. J. Abell, of Oswego, were the men selected. This committee deliberated two days, and concluded to drive a "stake for the meeting-house, on the hill in front of John Morton's." This was a little east of the village, on land now belonging to the Dr. Snell estate. The stake remained there for years. It is said that many a stone was thrown at it in derision. But it served rather to mark the line of final separation than the point of union. The records of the old society make no further allusion whatever to the subject of church-building. Memory and tradition must supply the history of what followed respecting a "house for the Lord to dwell in." All attempted compromises seem to have been abandoned, from the fixing of that fatal stake. It was a martyr-stake, for the spirit of con-

cession; and each faction said in substance: "You go your way, and I will go mine." The result was, that in or about the year 1828, each began the erection of a meeting-house. The bleak and stony hill west of Prattville, was selected by the East for their site. This spot was grand if not beautiful for situation; and from it the old church-spire was seen in after years, as the holy influence of those who worshiped beneath it was felt, by all the country round. After it had been painted, it could be distinctly seen by mariners on the lake, and from the distant hills of Orwell, Sandy Creek and Boylston. The site was given by Joel Savage Jr., and was adjoining the old Scriba lot of fifty acres; that having been, in 1828, sold to Zenas Butterfield, Chester Holeomb and Peter Pratt, at ten dollars per acre, to pay a salary balance of four hundred and sixty-two dollars and fifteen cents due to the pastor, Mr. Dixon.

#### THE CHURCH BUILT.

Before the village Church was organized, two houses of worship were erected. The Prattville house was raised and enclosed in 1828, and dedicated about Christmas time, 1829. Rice E. Darby was the boss framer upon the job, and was a fine mechanic. He was, however, financially embarrassed, and it is said that vexatious litigation was resorted to for the purpose of hindering the progress of the building.

Benjamin Arnold took the job of finishing the inside, and employed Hiram Walker, at seventy-five cents a day, to build the desk and doors. Lester Slack also worked under him, and Loren Webb built the sash, and the wainscoting of the gallery. Joel Savage made the mortar, the plastering having been delayed on account of the difficulty of getting lime. It was finally drawn from Oswego by David Sage Williams, over a road such as, for roughness, could scarcely be found in the county, to day. The painting, which was delayed several years, was superintended by Samuel Emery; Ransom Goss Williams having sent the materials for the purpose from New York. Different individuals, as they had time and skill, were employed

to work on the different parts of the enterprise, thus aiding in its accomplishment, and substituting what they had—time and materials—for money, which they had not. Chester Stillman drew corn to the Alms House, and delivered it up stairs, at less than three shillings per bushel, to pay his subscription. He also went with a team to Utica, and had the ball and weather-vane made for the spire.

Those times were not like these. We complain of stringency; but a fair experience of the privations, and labors, and make-shifts of that period, with a wilderness on every hand, nature to subdue, and resources, facilities, luxuries to create, would silence the murmurings of every reasonable person. To build a church then, when all were poor, and had to clear land, build houses, bridges and fences, and create numerous other agencies for the convenience of their homes and farms at the same time, and to construct roads and school-houses, was a summons for every man to do to the last inch of his ability. Hence John Becker's subscription of fifty dollars cash toward the house when the house he lived in was scarcely worth as much, was deemed a very large subscription.

And do you ask me, who designed and who executed the frescoing, upon the walls of that old temple? And who contributed to purchase the gorgeous carpet that graced its isles? And from what house were procured the brilliant chandeliers that hung pendant from its lofty walls? And from what ware rooms came the costly sofa, upon whose softness the pastor's dignity might recline, during the interim of his eloquent efforts? And what maker constructed the giant organ, out of whose pipes, and through whose snowy banks of keys, the praises of the Lord were drawn at pleasure, by the magic of the skillful players? And do you query as to how they obtained funds—whether by festivals, or concerts, or sociables, or lawn parties—with which to supply the pulpit with a gilt-edged Bible, and the chancel with a marble-top table, and the communion with a silver service?

Permit me to remind you that you are not to trifle upon

these reverent themes; there was no frescoing—no carpeting—no upholstery—no deep-sounding organ, no marble, nor silver—no gilding and garnishing, in that venerable house of God. Its appointments were severely plain, beautifully simple. Devout hearts supplied the melody of praise, which there were no passionless keys to furnish, though the viol and the flute were afterward brought in to blend with the tones of the singers; and of all adornings and attractions, let us hope, the pleasure of worship, and the power of the word, as it came sounding down like a lively oracle, from the pulpit suspended between the heavens and the earth, acceptably occupied the place.

When this noble structure was reared, we are told, Timothy Larrabee, one of the workmen, climbed to the plate, and looking northward, cried "Hurrah!" On being asked the cause of his enthusiasm, he replied that he could see the blue waters of the lake;—a sight on which no eye had rested, from that vicinity, before. And it is also claimed by some, that another of the men, at the raising, climbed to the top of the center pole, and threw to the earth a whisky bottle, which buried its nozzle several inches in the ground. The truth of this is open to question; but it is a sign of progress for the temperance cause, that Church buildings, universally raised by the aid of the rum bottle then, are seldom, if ever, thus made a monument of the devil's power now. And if the fate of that whisky bottle could but be a sign that from the Church of God shall yet go forth a power that shall hurl the liquor traffic to the dust, I would fain believe the tale to be true.

When the temple was all complete, save that the clean, fragrant wood had not been desecrated by the painter's brush, a dedication service was held, and Rev. Israel Brainard delivered the dedicatory sermon. Of the service beyond this fact I have gleaned no particulars, save that the choir chanted: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Mr. Dixon still remained pastor of the Church, and though

the work of building had been in progress, and a portion of the members had withdrawn, yet the society was enabled, during this and the preceding year to report, as it had not in several years before, that the salary was all paid up, to date of Presbytery meeting.

#### PREVIOUS PLACES OF MEETING.

With the scanty conveniences of a new country, it became necessary to utilize everything to the best advantage, and make each thing serve as many uses as possible. Hence the school-houses often served for religious meetings, and the barns for both meetings and schools; and the private houses for sanctuaries. Lewis Kellogg writes me that he distinctly remembers attending school and religious services in a log school-house on the hill where the Prattville school-house now stands, and also seeing the Lord's Supper administered at the house of Shubal Alfred, west of Mexicoville. Subsequently the log structure was burned, and a framed building erected of larger dimensions, for the accommodation of both school and meetings. In the west section, not long afterward, a similar building was erected, east of Salmon Creek, where now stands the Barrett Hotel. This building was subsequently used as a Methodist Episcopal parsonage. The services of the minister, Mr. Dixon, two-thirds of which had been given to the East, were finally divided equally between the two wings. Shubal Alfred's house and barn were both sanctuaries; the school-houses already named, and that in district No. 7, and Mr. Howard's school-house, also the first academy, and the brick tavern where the Mexico Hotel now stands, and Calvin Tiffany's tavern, together with the Edick school-house, Parish, the residences of Simon Hopson, Josiah Southworth, Daniel Southworth, Joel Savage, George Kingsley, John Ames, Jabin Wood, Joseph Evarts, Lueius Webb, Joseph Edict, and Rev. D. R. Dixon, all served as places of holy convocation, by turn.

The house and barn of Shubal Alfred must have been sacred in after years to many precious associations and memories.

The barn was occupied as a place for schools at different times ; and in one instance this little institution had to be moved from the main part into the stable, because the floor was needed for the threshing of grain. How the children succeeded in keeping their thoughts on their studies, we are not informed. Twenty years ago, a former resident of the town, visiting from the West his old friends here, went about among the dear haunts of his boyhood, and said that the only really "familiar spot he found in Mexico, was Shubal Alfred's kitchen."

The business meetings of the society were uniformly held in the Calvin Tiffany house, till 1818, when they began to be migratory, and were held in the school-house near Wm. Goit's, the school-house in district No. 7, the brick school-house, Rev. Dixon's residence, the school-house near Joel Savage's, and the house of Thomas Root,—till the completion of the church-building, when they were located there.

#### CHURCH OFFICERS.

We have seen that Ephraim Gates, Daniel Locke and Edmund Wheeler were the first elders of the Church. They were installed April 12, 1818. In the minutes of session, February 1, 1821, we find the following:—"It having pleased God to remove one of our elders by death, a meeting of the Church was called to make choice of another, and Shubal Alfred was unanimously chosen to the office of ruling elder." He at first declined the office, and delayed two months to be ordained ; but finally, he accepted the trust, and with Levi Mathews, who was elected April 1, of the same year, received a public consecration to his work. Alfred, however, seems not to have been a very enthusiastic Presbyterian, as in April, 1828, being called on to offer his excuse for absence from a recent meeting of session, he stated that he "had forgotten all about it ;" and he then requested the privilege of resigning the office of elder, assigning as a reason, that he "did not like the form of government." The Church took his request into consideration, and voted to grant it. Jabin Wood was elected in 1821, served till 1830 ; Thomas Root, elected in 1821, served till

1854; John Becker, elected in 1828, served till the Church disbanded; Chester Holcomb, elected in 1828, served till 1832; Martin P. Kellogg, elected in 1828, served till 1832, John Miller, elected 1831, served till 1836; when he went into the Parish Church, which was formed as a colony from this; Archibald Garrison, elected in 1832, also went with the Parish organization, 1836; Elias Brewster, elected in 1833, served till his death, 1858; Wm. A. Davis, elected 1834, served till the dissolution of the Church; Gates Miller and Wm. S. Tubbs, elected in 1852, served also till the Church dissolved its organization.

Of these elders words of respect, gratitude and even veneration, such as I have not time to utter, are fit to be spoken. Gates removed to Paris, Oneida county, and died in 1872, full of years, aged ninety-two. Locke removed to Ohio, and died there. Wheeler, the first deceased of the elders, died in Mexico, November, 1820. Alfred became a member of the village Church in 1830, and died in 1858, aged eighty-six years. Matthews and Wood, whose Christian record was always stainless, both went with the village Church, the former dying in 1862, aged eighty-eight, the latter, now an octogenarian, happy in the Lord, is finishing his days at Holmesville. Root, lovable and greatly beloved, removed to Cazenovia in 1854, and died aged eighty-eight, in 1863. His conversion, at the age of forty-five or forty-six years, is still remembered, as a fruit of sanctified affliction. Referring to this, I can but quote what Mr. Dixon, writing to Jane Root, now Mrs. Jane Loomis, from the West, in 1850, says of her father's first Christian experience. Adverting to a letter he had received from her, he writes to Mrs. Loomis:—

“I was deeply affected with its allusions to the days of other years. I related to my wife what took place by the grave of your sister Harriet, years before your birth, when your dear father requested the privilege of expressing to the assembled neighbors and friends the deep emotion that swelled his bosom, in view of the afflictive Providence which had removed his sixth and last child. His address was short, but it was such as moved the sympathies of all present. Grace had now triumphed over nature.

He spoke of the contrast between his present exercises and what they were a week before, when he was called to resign his fifth child. Then he murmured, but now he was sweetly resigned; then he was wretched; but he now enjoyed a peace which passeth all understanding. I thought, too, of another address which he made in the East school-house, at the commencement of the great revival of 1821; when every heart was melted, and every eye was bathed in tears, by a single expression that fell from his lips."

Touchingly does the now glorified pastor continue in his letter,

"Yes, dear Jane, those were precious seasons, which we enjoyed in Mexico, when the spirit of God descended upon that hill of Zion, and our families used to go to the house of the Lord in company."

Becker, who was born in 1797, in Duanesburg, Schenectady county, and came to Mexico in 1827, was a man of staunch principle, broad benevolence, public spirit, superior business talent, fervent consecration, and remarkable personal force. He was through many years a benefactor of the Church, the whole community, and of other communities also. He served God in his business and not in the *interim* of business; for that knew no interregnum. He aided liberally in the erection of the meeting-house, mainly built the old parsonage on the Prattville hillside, erected largely with his own means the meeting-house in Parish, and left many monuments of his Christian worth behind him, when, at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Avery, in Prattville, he died, in 1862, aged sixty-seven, his wife having preceded him, only six months before. Holcomb and Kellogg became ministers, and will be referred to in another place. John Miller died in Parish, 1862, and Archibald Garrison is still living near Janesville, Wisconsin. Elias Brewster, born in Columbia, Windham county, Connecticut, December 30, 1782, a descendant of Elder Wm. Brewster, of the Plymouth colony, had been a teacher on Long Island, and for a time in the parish of Dr. Lyman Beecher, with whom he boarded; came to Mexico in 1809, served the public as a Justice of the Peace, County Treasurer, and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas; and being converted in 1832, was the following year elected to the eldership, and adorned his office and his Chris-

tian profession, to the end. I witnessed his dying hours, which were full of pain, and yet radiant with peace. I shall never forget how "Father Robinson" bent low to the dying man's ear, and reminded him that God was present to give him aid. He lived in this town nearly half a century, and being dead, he will continue to speak for the truth by the lingering influence of a life that was eminently devoted to its service. Wm. A. Davis died in May, 1871, aged nearly sixty-five. He was a man of marked and uncompromising piety. In his biography, the Rev. L. N. Stratton said of him: "He compared every enunciation of theological belief, and out-growth of practice, with the Bible standard." He was a godly man. Gates Miller, aged seventy-nine, still living in Mexico, is a venerable saint of God, whose pathway shineth, more and more, as it nears the perfect day. Wm. S. Tubbs, last elected of the elders, born in Whitehall, died in perfect peace in Prattville, April 28, 1876, aged seventy years; his wife having preceded him by only a few weeks. His religious life was his whole life. His eye was single, and generally his whole body was full of light. His breath was prayer; his groans were prayer; his rejoicings were an inspiration to more prayer; his songs were but another form of prayer; prayer dawned for him with the morning light, and mingled in the stillness of his evening shades; when he went to the house of God, and retired from it, prayer hallowed his footsteps, and lifted his thoughts. Religion was to him an atmosphere; duty a daily fact; eternity a constant reality; the kingdom of Christ his Alpha and Omega. He was too serious for levity; too conscientious for worldliness; too kind for any form of cruelty; too much in earnest to be governed by any fastidious rules of fitness. He was "instant, in season, out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord." On the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, in Prattville, he was one of its first members, and remained in that communion, a pillar indeed, till he passed from toil to the fruitions of which he had luxuriant foretastes, even here.

## THE PASTORS.

The Church had five regular pastors, during its history of forty-nine years. Till eight years had elapsed, only transient supplies, under missionary appointment, had been its teachers. Brainard, Waterman, Adams, Leavitt, Dunlap, and perhaps others, including Dixon three years before his installation, filled up this period.

## DAVID R. DIXON.

Mr. Dixon was a graduate of Yale College, and had been a school-teacher before coming to Mexico. I have already spoken of his ordination, in Mathias Whitney's unfinished hotel, in 1814. He remained pastor till the Autumn of 1832, and was regularly dismissed by Presbytery, in January, 1833. Hence his labors in the town covered more than eighteen years. He is spoken of as a man of discretion and practical wisdom, a good Christian educator, and a devoted pastor. His conscientiousness was a trait which gave him an exemplary power among all the people. Probably no pastor so thoroughly impressed himself upon the Church and community, molding habits of thought and directing the religious developments of old and young, as did he. He taught the young, in private classes, and inspired their ambition for culture. He also encouraged benevolence, and cultivated missionary zeal among the young. Mr. Williams gave him the use of two acres of land, on which he induced the boys to raise corn for the misionary cause. He was with the people "at all seasons;" in the infancy of the Church, and during its feeble struggles, in the "day of small things;" he was with them, to sympathize and counsel, through that well-remembered year of sickness, sorrow and poverty, when the Congestive fever, with other bilious complaints, filled the homes and hearts of all with care, anxiety and gloom; when almost every house was a hospital, and the well were not enough to take care of the sick; the farms had to be neglected; farmers would take turns in carrying loads of watchers with their teams, down into the Lake Shore neighborhood, to minister to the sick, who were to

be found in every family. It was his mission, under these trials, to minister alike to the spiritual and the temporal needs of his suffering flock. Tender indeed are the bonds that are fostered between pastor and people, in seasons of domestic affliction. He was patient, and allowed his salary to go unpaid during the year of sickness and dearth. His vacations were not spent at Saratoga or the sea-shore, but in labors among the weak Churches that had no pastors. After his resignation, he spent six months in mission work in Canada; returned and labored some in Parish and Mexicoville; after Mr. Stowe's resignation, supplied six months again in Prattville; removed in 1836 to Tifton, Michigan, and soon after to Unadilla, in the same State, where he died, June 24th, 1861, being ten days under seventy years old. His last years were spent in colporteur work, under the American Tract Society; this agreeing better with his health, which was impaired by seasons of nervous despondency, which were "a part of his physical birth-right." Speaking of him at my request, his son, Joseph R. Dixon, of Homer, says:—"He was a man of good common sense, unaffected modesty, industrious habits and undoubted piety. He loved to do good, and his labors resulted in the progress of God's cause on the earth."

W M . B . S T O W E .

Soon after the retirement of Mr. Dixon, the Church extended a call to Rev. Wm. B. Stowe, and on the 9th of June, 1833, Presbytery met and installed him over the Church, following the service with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Mr. Stowe continued pastor till 1836, when, at his request, Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relation.

I here introduce a letter from his son, Rev. A. M. Stowe, of Canandaigua, agent of Auburn Theological Seminary, in which the facts of his life are briefly grouped:—

"CANANDAIGUA, AUGUST, 1876.

"Rev. William B. Stowe, was born in Marlborough, Middlesex county, Massachusetts, January 1st, 1782. Graduated at Williams College, 1811; studied Theology, privately, with a pastor.

"The first ten years of his ministry was in New England. The year

1822 he came with his family to this State. His field of labor for twelve years was in the town of Alexandria, Jefferson county; a new field, population sparse, work vast. His home was Plessis, where he organized a Church and built an edifice. At Theresa also he organized a Church and erected a place of worship. There were five or six out-stations where he frequently preached, including Alexandria Bay. During nearly the entire period of twelve years, there was little or no preaching or pastoral work accomplished by any other evangelical minister in that town.

"In 1834 Mr. Stowe received and accepted a call to Prattville, town of Mexico, Oswego county, N. Y. Here he preached three years, and then received a call to Defiance, Ohio. After two or three years he was re-called to Prattville. His next field of labor was Sandy Creek, in the same county. Laboring there four or five years he was called to Bergen, Genesee county, N. Y. One year closed his labors, which embraced the period from December 1844, to December 1845.

"During this year Mrs. Stowe died. His advanced age and impaired health caused him to relinquish his pastoral work. However, Mr. Stowe was not idle; up to the close of life he was about his Master's work; without compensation for the most part he toiled. His home was mostly among his children in this State and in Ohio. The last Sabbath but one of his life he was in his place preaching, though feeble. His sickness was very brief. The disease that terminated life was Apoplexy. He fell asleep April 21st, 1855, aged seventy-four years. At Ridgeville, Henry county, Ohio, repose his remains. He died surrounded by his children and grand-children.

Very sincerely yours,

A. M. STOW.

*To Rev. A. P. Burgess, Newark, N. Y.*

Mr. Stowe is remembered in Mexico, with great respect. The fruits of his labor are still seen there.

J. L. MARVIN.

Mr. Dixon finished his services as stated supply for six months, the last of September, 1836; his last act being to baptize, in Parish, on Sabbath evening, two of his grandchildren, Cornelia Alida and Frances Delia, children of James and Eliza Jane Humiston. From this period on till 1843, the records of Church and Society were very carelessly kept. Much depends upon a pastor, as to the thoroughness with which a Church transacts its business. Little is recorded of the few ensuing years. A Rev. Mr. Dickinson supplied for

one year, Rev. Samuel Cole preached three months, Rev. James H. Carruth, six months. In the Spring of 1840, Rev. John L. Marvin, who had studied theology at Auburn Seminary, began to supply; was installed in 1842, and resigned in 1843. Little is known of the nature or results of his labors. His own habits, and those of the Church during his pastorate, were extremely easy. Thoroughness seems not to have been the rule. It is not a wonder that at the end of this period, Presbytery passed a reproof upon the elders, for the indifferent manner in which their business was being done. It is said that Mr. Marvin afterward departed from the ministry and entered the legal profession. Little is known hereabout, concerning his subsequent history, save that a few years ago he died in Michigan.

E Z R A S C O V E L .

Mr. Scovel began labor here in the summer of 1843, and continued pastor of the Church ten years. He was a graduate of Middlebury College. His installation sermon was preached by Rev. Ralph Robinson; and Revs. Dada, and Dr. R. W. Condit now deceased, took part. His ministry was a struggle against the increasing drift village-ward, and however efficient could not possibly have neutralized this tendency. Still, the Church was blessed, and souls were added to it, under his devoted labors. He was a kind pastor, and a clear, concise, sententious preacher. In the communion service, it was conceded that his equal was seldom found. Nathaniel Slack, whose discrimination was critical, often said that he had never known a minister who could make the Lord's Supper so impressive as he. It is believed that Rev. Comfort I. Slack who during his brief ministry became distinguished for his success in bringing out the tender significance of this ordinance, owed his happy manner of conducting it in part to his former pastor, Mr. Scovel.

Mr. S. was not a man of the most exact habits. His penmanship was a serawl; his horse was seldom harnessed aright;

his fences tumbled down, and his garden grew over with weeds; he was always forgetting something; when "father Robinson," a paragon of precision, his successor, went into the barn, he looked around and inquired where brother Scovel hung his harness, and was told that he never hung it anywhere; he kept it on the floor.

Before coming to Mexico, he had served the Church in Phelps, several years, and after his resignation here, in June, 1853, he labored in Marathon, then returned and purchased a place in New Haven, which he subsequently sold, and removed to Saugatuck, Michigan, where at the age of eighty years he died in 1874. He was a good man, and many in the Judgment will call him blessed. His orphaned daughter, Marcia, has her home with Mrs. John Gilispie, of Fulton.

RALPH ROBINSON.

Mr. Robinson began preaching temporarily here in June, 1853; before the formal dismissal of Mr. Scovel by the Presbytery. He continued acting pastor till October, 1857,—four years. During his ministry, the process of disintegration became more visible; Mexicoville drew steadily upon the membership; Prattville people became discouraged as to future prospects; the congregation grew sparse, one and another took letters of dismission from the Church, and when Mr. Robinson left, his wife being the last to receive a letter, there were only fifty members, and some of these were non-resident. This decline was no fault of the pastor.

Mr. Robinson was a man of peculiarly marked individuality. He was a clear, precise, positive thinker; the type of his mind fitted him to be a theologian, an educator, a disciplinarian. He was firm, but kind; benevolent, but judicious and systematic in the use of his means; he was an exact man—a noble man—a conscientious man—a preacher who most profoundly and earnestly believed the doctrines of Divine sovereignty, total depravity, and regeneration by grace alone, which with such fervent unction he preached. He regarded the Divine scheme of the gospel as the grandest reality in the universe;

and so he gave it the unbounded admiration of his great soul. The sentiment which ran through his fifty years of ministration was expressed when, on his dying bed, as the bread and wine were being partaken with him by his pastor, Mr. Reid, and a few others, he exclaimed in the midst of the service: "Grace, grace, grace! from the foundation to the top-most stone."

He was a descendant of John Robinson, pastor of the Leyden Pilgrim Church in Holland. He graduated at Middlebury College in 1805, studied theology with Rev. Holland Weeks, of Pittsford, Vermont, was licensed to preach by the Rutland Congregational Association, Vermont, preached a year in and about Malone, N. Y., was ordained and installed over the Churches of Granville and Hartford, Washington County, November, 1810, where he ministered twelve and one-half years; in May, 1822, was settled over the Church in Marshal, Oneida County, where a precious revival attended his labors, which were continued five years; in 1828 he removed to New Haven, Oswego County, preaching there and in Mexicoville two years; in 1830 he was called to Pulaski, and continued his ministrations sixteen years; his labors there being abundantly blessed of God. At one time, on a single Sabbath, eighty persons publicly professed their faith in Christ, by uniting with the Church. In all, one hundred and nineteen were received on profession, and eighty-one by letter, during the period of his pastorate in Pulaski. Then he returned to New Haven, supplied there seven years, came to Prattville in 1853, remaining four years, and finished his pastoral work of half a century, by supplying the Presbyterian Church of Constantia one year. Thus he ceased from his labors, and his works still follow him.

Many incidents, illustrating his clear penetration, and his decision of character are still remembered of him. For instance, in the year 1842, Rev. John W. Fowler, then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Utica, was deposed by his Presbytery, for gross immorality which had been proved

against him. His defense was that he was laboring under fits of "moral insanity," when he committed the acts of immorality. An appeal to Synod was sustained on this ground; able medical and clerical testimony being offered in Fowler's behalf. Father Robinson was moderator of the Synod when the vote was taken, and when Rev. F. R. Spencer arose and demanded that the moderator should be allowed to vote on the case, Robinson got up and said he had been trying, by every possible means, for two day, by a fair investigation to ascertain the nature of that "moral insanity" which had been urged in Fowler's behalf; and, he said, "I have come to this conclusion: that it is the devil in the heart—just the kind of insanity that rules in the heart of every wicked man, when he perpetrates his deeds of darkness." Still the Synod reversed, to its subsequent sorrow, the act of the Presbytery—thus restoring Fowler; and Robinson and others protested in vain. A part of the Oneida Presbytery withdrew the same day and proceeded to organize the Presbytery of Utica.

"Father Robinson" had a brother who was a Congregational minister in Vermont, a son of that brother being now pastor of the Congregational Church in Homer, N. Y. He had also two sons, E. W., and S. N., who graduated from Hamilton College and Auburn Theological Seminary. The former has passed from earth; the latter is laboring in the Western part of New York, and has also a son in the ministry in that part of the State. It is noticeable that by Robinson and the Brewsters, the old Church was linked to the immortal memories of the Pilgrims and Plymouth Rock.

On the termination of Mr. Robinson's labors, A. P. Burgess, a young licentiate commenced labor among the Prattville people. Many of the old members took letters to the village, and Presbytery appointed a commission to dissolve the old Church. But it did not choose to be at once officially extinguished, and so voted. In a few years, however, the final throes came. The session granted letters to all, and a grand organic life became extinct.

## FRUITS OF THE CHURCH.

To trace all the streams of good that flowed, during half a century, from the threshold of that old sanctuary on the hill, would not be a possible task. To attempt it, would be presumption. It is enough to say, that it was a grand, a strong, a glorious, a useful Church. Its elements of power were above the average. It contained men and families such as will give dignity and worth to any Christian fellowship. It would be pleasant to speak at length of its inside history. It was a devoted and working Church. It obeyed the rule in regard to infant baptism—a rule so often made the exception now. It enforced its discipline, as no Church seems to in modern days.

Thus, we find Mrs. L. M. faithfully bringing charges against S., wife of G. K., for “treating her husband with habitual disrespect, and not obeying her husband in the Lord” Mrs. K. confessed the charge, and was restored to the Church. We find Luke Butterfield and Thomas Root, in brotherly faithfulness, seeking to reclaim Mr. H. from the sins of “falsehood, slander and Sabbath-breaking.” H. humbly confessed these faults, in part; but his confession had not the ring of deep penitence, and he was finally suspended. Mr. L., neglecting his covenant obligations, and becoming unfriendly to the pastor, also defective in some of his doctrinal views, on the whole the Church finally ejected him. Mr. W. was brought before the session for “Intemperance, neglect of family worship and of public worship.” Before this case was well disposed of, deacon Gates entered complaint against Mr. O., for “neglect of family worship and absenting himself from the communion.” Thus, the members were constantly held under check and rein. Wanderers were looked after, before they had wandered very long or far. To be a Church-member then, meant disciplinarily, more than I fear it does now; it meant to “walk by the same rule, and mind the same things.” The “book” was not a dead letter; nor the “covenant” a “glittering generality.”

It would be pleasant to speak of the seasons of fasting and

prayer, of consultations, and visitings from house to house; of the great revival in 1821, when at an early hour in the morning, the voice of prayer might be heard in every house; of the revival in 1831, which produced such gracious fruits; of the Female Mission Society, out of which grew the Sewing Society, organized as early as 1828, and still in existence; of the meeting of prayer for Colleges, always well sustained; of the noble efforts for temperance,\* reaching back to 1827-8, when Rev. Mr. Eels and others became pioneers in this cause; of the stand taken by some of the pastors in the anti-slavery struggle before that cause was generally espoused,—when some of the members, rather than hear an abolition sermon, insisted on performing their devotions under the horse-shed.

It would be pleasant to go back again, to the time when Mr. Dixon organized a Bible-class in 1814, which for many years continued to meet, Sabbath afternoons in Summer, and evenings in the Winter,—the fruits of which labor are blessing the world yet.

It might be profitable to recall the time in 1814, when Amanda Brewster, of fragrant memory, niece of the Judge and the Dr., organized the first Sunday-school in the town, perhaps the first in the county, on Prattville Hill; and to trace the history of that good seed, modestly sown, as it has multiplied itself since.

It would be pleasant, also, to recall some of those playful

---

\*The tone of the Church was so high on the temperance question that in 1836 some of the Parish members, desiring greater liberty, drew off to organize a Lutheran Church. From the sessional record of June 19, 1836, I take the following: "It appeared from a memorial sent into the Church, signed by these, (Miller, Crim, etc.,) and other members of the Church residing in Parish, that unwillingness to unite with their brethren in the promotion of a Church on the principle of total abstinence from the use of and traffic in ardent spirits, is the occasion of this request. The Session expressed their deep regret that this was the case. Yet they thought it best, on the whole, to grant the request, and Mr. Dixon was authorized to make out the letters."

scenes of the good old days, which relieve them of a kind of awful and painful solemnity; for, history, like statuary, too often presents its characters to us only with their features unrelaxed. They seem to us oppressively grave.

But there were jolly as well as sedate people, even in those times of sterner *regime*. An incident well illustrates this. Mrs. Joel Savage had been wont to chide the boys and girls, who rode to parties, funerals and Sabbath services on horseback, for riding too rapidly home on Sabbath afternoons, from the meetings at Calvin Tiffany's. Knowing that Mrs. Savage herself rode a horse which, when excited, it was not in her power to hold in, the young rogues resolved to try a plot. So at the close of service the next Sabbath, they quietly waited behind, till the good woman had mounted her beast and started; when they followed after, so rousing the energies of the fiery steed that "Aunt Abigail," in spite of herself, rode home at break-neck speed, out-stripping all the rest.

#### LABORERS GIVEN BY THIS CHURCH TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.

An important though brief chapter remains for me yet to present. One of the most useful functions of any Church is to produce godly and faithful ministers. This Church was remarkably fruitful in that direction. No chapter in the annals of its work is more remarkable or more gratifying than this.

Ten men have honored the gospel ministry, who were members either of the Church or Sunday-school, or both. These I will briefly name:—First:—

GEO. W. FINNEY.—He became a Congregational minister, an eloquent orator and advocate in the temperance cause, and died in Oakland, California, 1865, aged sixty-nine. He was a brother of C. G. Finney, D. D., the great Evangelist.

CHESTER HOLCOMB.—Mr. Holcomb was once an Elder of the Church, and afterward, for thirty years, labored in the ministry. He has two sons in the ministry; Rev. Chester Holcomb, Pekin, China, and Rev. G. T. Holcomb, Downer's Grove, Illinois. His second wife, several years preceptress of the Academy at Newark, is now a practicing physician in Syracuse, and resides with her

son-in-law, Rev. George T. Dowling. An outline of Mr. Holcomb's life and labors is found in the following letter from his son:—

DOWNER'S GROVE, DUPAGE CO., ILL., OCTOBER 21ST, 1876.

“ DEAR BRO :—My father was born, September 10th, 1804, at Sand Lake, N. Y. :—studied for the ministry with an active pastor, and was first settled in Winfield, N. Y., where he staid ten years. In 1848 he removed to Lewis Co., N. Y., where he organized a Congregational Church in Port Leyden, which is now flourishing. In 1851 he removed to Williamburg, N. Y. ; in 1854 to Webster, where a deep work of grace attended his preaching ; in 1857 he removed to Joy, and labored there for six years. Fairville and Sodus Centre were out-stations, and in both of these, revivals sprang up. With the former field, especially, the work was extensive and powerful. A Church was organized on each field, carrying on meetings at both these places at once; church-building being projected at each point, also wore on his health until it gave way. One year spent at Fairville ended his active service. He removed to Newark, where he died in the Autumn of 1865. He leaves a blessed memory, a benediction to his sons who follow in his steps in China and America. He had great faith. At one time an officious brother minister tried to work his way in between my father and his people. Calling at a house he said, ‘Mr. H., what will you say to Peter at the gate of heaven ?’ Quick came the reply, ‘I'll tell him I am Elder Holcomb ; he will open the gate and let me right in.’

Yours fraternally,

G. F. HOLCOMB.”

Mr. Holcomb won the reputation of an earnest revival preacher, and a powerful expounder of the Word, in the Churches with whom he labored.

LEWIS KELLOGG.—Mr. Kellogg has kindly consented to furnish a letter of interesting reminiscences, which is here inserted:—

NORTH GRANVILLE, AUGUST 10TH, 1876.

“ REV. A. P. BURGESS :—I was born in Mexico, Oneida county, N. Y., November 20th, 1805. Prattville, on the north-east corner of which stood the log-house of my nativity, the only house there, was not known, nor was Oswego county organized till I was eleven years of age. My education till I was twenty-one, was all acquired in the school-house on the hill where stood the Prattville church. In my infancy my parents removed to a new place, which then meant an unbroken forest on the street running from Colosse to Mexico Point, one-half a mile north of the school-house, a log structure, burnt when I was about eight years old, and replaced by a

large frame-building in which sixty scholars gathered in Winter, and which was the only room for religious services till I was twenty-two. In that building were held all the public meetings during the first great revival in that community in 1821. In June following, then in my sixteenth year, in company with about thirty others, I united with the Church; Mr. Dixon pastor. I commenced school-teaching when nineteen, and in 1827 being of age, and after teaching four months, I entered the Academy at Mexicoville, and soon after the Oneida Institute at Whitesboro. I was again in the Academy in 1828, till the Institute opened, when I returned to that. Early in 1829 my health failed; I relinquished study, but strictly from convictions of duty resumed it in 1832; entering the Academy and remaining teaching certain classes to pay my board and tuition, till the Spring of 1834, when I went once more to the Oneida Institute, where all board-bills were paid in labor. In the Autumn of that year I entered Auburn Seminary. Drs. Richards, Mills and Perrine, then constituted the Faculty; Dr. Cox was added while I was there. Before the year closed my health again gave out, and in September 1835, I started for Boston taking a schooner from New York, and engaged five or six weeks in mackerel fishing around Cape Cod. Returning improved but not restored, I asked and received from the Presbytery of Oswego, a license to preach. That was in the Prattville Church, on February 7th, 1836. Rev. Charles Jones, then of Bellville, Ontario, was present, and before my examination was completed, presented a request for my services from two small Churches which he had then recently organized,—one in Wellington, the other at Pleasant Bay, both on the north shore of Lake Ontario. The next day I started with him for my first field. The Churches were ten miles apart, and being physically unable to write sermons, I arranged trains of thought mentally, and often on horse-back. Before my engagement in Canada expired, I received through a friend a request to supply a Church in Columbus, N. J., recently organized by the third Presbytery of Philadelphia. That Church had its meetings in a tent, but as Autumn approached, a change was indispensable, and I raised in Philadelphia, near seven hundred dollars to aid in building a chapel. That edifice, twenty-eight by forty feet, plain but neat, was finished before January 1st 1837. While at Columbus I remained a member of Dr. Beman's Church, in Troy, N. Y. Closing my six months engagements there, I returned to Troy, and met a member of a new Congregational Church in Union village, Washington county, N. Y., wanting a preacher. I went there April, 1837, and preached six Sabbaths, and within ten days after leaving, received a call from the congregation, which but for the lapse of the ten days I should have accepted; but pending this delay Providence sent me to Whitehall, and the tenth day after reaching there, a total stranger, I received a unanimous call to become pastor of the Church. I did not

hesitate between the places. The last Sabbath in June, 1837, I preached my first sermon in the pulpit which I occupied, altogether, twenty-three years. The Summer meeting of the Troy Presbytery being just passed, the prosecution of the call was deferred till the meeting of the Synod in October, when arrangements were made for my ordination and installation, which occurred in November; Dr. Beman preaching. I remained in Whitehall, till May, 1854, seventeen years, when I received and accepted a call to the second Presbyterian Church in Oswego. There for two entire summers I was seriously out of health. In July, 1856, I went to Trumansburg, N. Y., where I remained till March, 1862. July, 1862, I was recalled to Whitehall, where in 1868, I was laid aside by a very serious attack upon my lungs, which prevented all ministerial work for two and a half years. Meantime I visited Florida and Minnesota, and went to Salt Lake. I sent in my resignation to the Church in April, 1869; my second settlement there thus covering about six years. For results of my two Pastorates in Whitehall, I refer to an enclosed article, from a Whitehall editor,—a Baptist, and no special friend of mine. Returning from my trip over the Rocky Mountains, I found the Church here vacant, and anxious for a supply. Being but nine miles from Whitehall, I had preached here many times, and was personally acquainted with a majority of the congregation. I came first for two Sabbaths and was very cordially invited to become their pastor. I accepted with the stipulation that I was to preach but once a Sabbath. I have however so far recovered as now, in my seventy-first year, to preach twice and do all necessary pastoral work with little inconvenience. It is a very small Church, but wealthy and intelligent. My work of course is soon to close. Many mercies call for gratitude; many defects demand humility; some spiritual experiences inspire trust, and 'help laid on one mighty to save,' encourages hope.

Fraternally yours,

L. KELLOGG."

ERASTUS M. KELLOGG.—Mr. Kellogg was a member of the old Prattam Church, and was a classmate in Hamilton College with the now Rev. Dr. Kendall, Secretary of the Board of Home Missions. They walked from Mexico to Clinton, in mid-Summer, carrying their shoes part of the distance in their hands, to be examined for entrance. He went through the College in a class with Dr. Kendall and Dr. T. W. Dwight.

Of Mr. Kellogg's two pastorates in Whitehall, extending in all over twenty-three years, during which extended improvements were made with church-building, and large accessions to the membership, the editor of a Whitehall Journal says:—"He

probably exerted a stronger influence in this community, in every respect, than any other man who has resided in it." He is now "well stricken in years," and yet is an active pastor at North Granville.

Mr. Kellogg has written me from Hammonton, New Jersey, where he now labors, as follows:—

*Ext.*—"As soon as I was large enough to walk from Union Square, where we then lived, I went to the Sabbath-school held in the 'Slack' School-house,' on the hill west of Prattville, and opposite where the church was afterwards built, the distance being over two miles. Luke Butterfield, long since gone to Heaven, was my teacher. My mother, Mrs. Esther K. Kellogg, was a member of the Church from before my recollection. My sister, Rebecca Ann Kellogg, now Mrs. Clawson, living at Brodhead, Wisconsin, found the 'pearl of great price,' in the revival, I think of 1829, and united with the Church. I united with the Church in 1829, at the age of fourteen. We lived then six miles distant, in the town of Albion. My father, Alvan N. Kellogg, united with the Church about 1830 or 1831. Rev. Mr. Dixon, of precious memory, was the pastor. I prepared for College, and pursued the studies of the Freshmen year at Mexico Academy; first under Mason W. Southworth, and afterwards under Professor Hapgood. The late Mrs. Kingsley and other members of the Prattville Church, furnished me provisions, a week each, I walking over for them once a week, and boarding myself at the Academy. I graduated at Hamilton College in 1840; studied Theology at Auburn Seminary, and began my ministry at New Haven, Oswego county, N. Y."

He spent several years in successful pastoral labors in New England, and has recently removed to his present Charge.

**MARTIN POWELL KELLOGG.**—On May 13th, 1828, John Becker, M. P. Kellogg, and Chester Holcomb, were elected by the Church to the office of ruling Elders. Kellogg subsequently became an earnest and eloquent minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and died in Corydon, Wayne county, Iowa, a few years since, aged fifty-eight years.

**ALFRED M. STOWE.**—Pastor Stowe had a son Alfred, who became a minister. Mr. Stowe was, according to the records, examined by Session January 2nd, and he and Mrs. Wortman were received into the Church January 3rd, 1836. He entered Hamilton College in 1845, graduated and entered Auburn Seminary in 1849, whence he graduated in 1852. In June of that

year he took up his residence in Canandaigua, where he has since resided. From June 1852 to June 1860, he was district Secretary of the American Tract Society, for central and western New York. From 1860 to 1873 he was district Secretary of the Publishing Board of Home Missions, for the State of New York, excepting the Synod of New York. From May 1873 to the present, he has acted as financial Secretary of Auburn Theological Seminary. In a hasty letter to me he says:—"I have enjoyed my work from year to year. The Lord has seemed to precede me."

SAMUEL COLE.—Mr. Cole was reared under the fostering care of this Church. The following letter, which I venture to insert, will place his history before the reader:—

KINGSVILLE, ASHTABULA COUNTY, OHIO, AUGUST 22nd, 1876.

"REV. A. P. BURGESS:—DEAR SIR:—You request me to inform you in respect to my age; when converted, when educated, and in respect to my labors, &c. In reply I would say, that it is quite repugnant to my feelings to say much about myself, or, about the results of my labors. Others may do so if they please. The only reason why I consent to comply with your request is, that there is no one, so far as I know, who can, intelligently, give you the information that you request. This is my apology for saying what I do about myself.

"I was born in Mexico, N. Y., in 1807; was converted, as I trust I was, during the powerful revivals in town, 1830 or '31. Abandoning the business plans of life, from a deep sense of duty,—and having graduated from the shoemaker's bench,—I commenced my study for the ministry in Mexico Academy; completed my literary course in Oneida Institute, and my theological studies at Oberlin. After leaving Oberlin, most of my time, (not all,) from 1840 to 1843, was spent in special and protracted efforts to bring sinners to Christ, and that too with gratifying results. Previous to this, during the second year of my theological course, at the earnest solicitation of the trustees of the Prattville Church, I spent the Fall and Winter months with them in attempts to do good. When invited thus to do, I felt as though I could not do it. It was a burden too great for me to bear! How could I attempt to conduct the services of the sanctuary! How could I attempt to instruct the fathers and mothers in the Church, who were so much my seniors in age and experience! I was not prepared for such an effort and my means of preparation were very meager indeed, and I felt like running away to escape responsibility, as Jonah did. The trustees told me that they had

tried in vain to obtain a supply for the pulpit, and that if I would not, come to their help, they would give up the effort, and let the "Church die and be buried." It seemed to us a case of life or of death. It was with much fear and trembling that I commenced my labors with a Church amid which I had spent my youthful days. But good was done. Some were converted and joined the Church; differences were healed among the membership, and for years after, the means of grace were sustained among them. In the Spring 1843, I was invited to take charge of a Church in Shippanny, N. J. On arriving there I found that the male members of the Church were very much alienated; a result occasioned by so many of them having failed in business. In the meantime there were eight or ten sisters of the Church who were united in prayer and effort for a revival of religion, as the only hope of the Church. This gave me hope. In view of outside appearances, I often felt that I was doing about as much good as a man would in attempting to split open a rock with a puff-ball. Though often disposed to leave as I was, something held me there to the place and to the work. Suffice it to say that by the aid of two ministerial brethren, a series of meetings were commenced, which resulted in a powerful revival of religion; and a short time before I left I received into the Church thirty-two members, and more were to follow. Previous to this, apparently, the aspect of things was exceedingly dark and discouraging. There was hardly a ray of light to inspire hope and courage. We were completely shut up into God. And yet it became quite evident, when the young converts related their experience, that during all this time of darkness, God was so powerfully moving on the minds of some that they were constrained in the night season to get up to pray. In view of such results, after such a season of dark nights and discouragement, I made a solemn promise to God that I would never again be discouraged though discouragements might beset me at every step. Sometime during 1844, I assumed the pastoral relation over a Church in north Ashburnham, Massachusetts. In five different places in that State and in Connecticut I labored eighteen years; in each of which some good was done in various ways, besides the ingathering of many precious souls into the fold of Christ. I have also sustained the pastoral relation over two Churches in this State:—Wymouth and Saybrook; in each of which during our pastorate, there were quite a number who came out on the side of the Lord. At length health failed me, and I was obliged to give up the pastoral work, and most of the time for four years past, I have preached as a temporary supply. Because of ill-health, January last, I closed my public labors expecting never to resume them again.

"Now, in view of what has been said, I wish it not to be understood that I have been as useful as I might have been, had I been more faith-

ful. A review of the past leads me to mourn over my mistakes and short-comings, and if any one has been blessed by my instrumentality, I feel disposed to give to God all the praise and the glory; for without Him we can do nothing. Success in Christian effort disposes one to praise God for the privilege of doing something to honor Him.

Yours, S. COLE."

Mr. Cole has been an earnest advocate of the Oberlin type of Theology and Christian living, and his labors have been signally owned of God.

EVERY S. WALKER,—whose venerable mother was a loved member of this Church, was reared under its ministry and in its Sunday-school. He began study in Mexico Academy; graduated from Oberlin College in 1854; from Union Theological Seminary in 1857; became pastor of the Congregational Church in Rockville, Connecticut, and remained till 1864; was pastor at Dover, New Hampshire, from 1864 to 1868; at Fairhaven, Massachusetts, from 1868 to 1871, when he accepted a call to the growing and vigorous Presbyterian Church in Gloversville, N. Y., to which he still ministers.

JAMES A. SKINNER.—Mr. Skinner, son of Judge Skinner, was also reared under the teachings and in the spiritual atmosphere of this Church. He graduated at Hamilton College and Union Theological Seminary. He has been a Presbyterian pastor in California, also in Cleveland, Ohio, and is now conducting successfully a branch department of the Presbyterian Publication Board, in Syracuse, N. Y.

REV. COMFORT I. SLACK.—Born and reared in the bosom of this Church, to which his affections clung till the last; graduated from Hamilton College in 1860, and then from Auburn Seminary in 1863; after supplying a Church for a season in northern New York, became pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Newton, Iowa. Here, in the midst of ardent labors and in the dawn of a growingly popular and useful ministry, he died in 1865, aged twenty-nine years. He was to me a loved, confidential friend.

Further mention should be made of

AMBY H. SAVAGE.—Son of Reuben Savage, who became a

member of the Church in 1821; a young man beloved and of much promise. He, with two hundred ex-slaves, started from New Orleans for the Colony of Liberia, as an agent of the Colonization Society, in 1833, and landing there, died in the short space of nine months.

Nor can I pass without notice, the name of RANSOM GOSS WILLIAMS,—who became a member in 1830, whose venerable mother, Asenith Williams, still lingers to tell the story of the past. Mr. Williams in boyhood, learned the weaver's trade, in the old Prattville factory; and he afterward wove of noble deeds, the fadeless webb of a useful life. He became connected with the business management of the New York Evangelist at an early day. He also espoused the abolition cause, and like Dr. J. C. Jackson, now of Dansville Water Cure, who obtained his wife, daughter of Judge Brewster, from the Prattville Church, became an eloquent lecturer in behalf of the slave. Subsequently Mr. Williams founded, in Utica, an abolition paper, entitled, "The Emancipator and Human Rights;"—a publication so radical, that for some utterances it contained, the Governor of Alabama made a demand on the Governor of this State, for Mr. Williams, that he might be taken South and suitably chastised. He was born in 1811, and died in New York, 1857. Not soon will the earnest addresses he made, as from time to time he visited the old home-church in Prattville, be forgotten.

Nor can I pass by the son of the first pastor, MR. JOSEPH R. DIXON,—who graduated at Hamilton College, and became a teacher, following the profession twenty years; edited a useful paper in Homer, N. Y., twenty years more, and is now one of the pillars of the Congregational Church of that village.

ALGERNON S. SAVAGE,—is recalled by many as a young man of superior talent, who intended to go through Oberlin College and prepare for the ministry. Before entering College, however, and while on his way thither, death put a sudden period to his earthly hopes and plans.

HON. CHARLES R. SKINNER,—of Watertown, now in the New

York Legislature, and Prof. Hiram W. Slack, Principal of a High School in St. Pauls, Minnesota, were in their boyhood, members of the Sabbath-school, in the "old church on the hill."

At some time connected with the Church, Sunday-school, or Society, were the following physicians:—

**SARDIUS BREWSTER**,—who studied medicine with Dr. Oliver Brewster, his eldest brother, of Becket, Massachusetts; was licensed by the Connecticut Medical Society, as a physician and surgeon, in 1808, and by the Columbia county Medical Society of this State, in 1809; was the resident doctor in Prattville for nearly fifty years. He was a Christian gentleman of the New England type, and was personally and professionally much respected and loved. He was a descendant of Elder Wm. Brewster, of the Mayflower; the sacred ashes of whose home and grave, at the foot of "Captain's Hill," Duxbury, Massachusetts, were included in the parish where I was pastor from 1870 to 1873. The Dr. became a member of the Prattville Church in 1842, and died April 18, 1866, in Ohio, aged seventy-one years.

**ALFREDERICK SMITH**,—whose early home was with Judge Pratt, studied medicine with Dr. Brewster, and became afterward for many years, a successful physician in Mexico village. He has retired from practice, and his wife having died some years since, he devotes much time to travel; is a lover of literature, of Nature, and of antiquarian studies. Mexico is one of his homes.

**WAITE WADSWORTH BREWSTER**,—a son of the Dr., graduated at Hamilton College, and became a physician, and now resides in Austinburgh, Ohio. He united with the Church in 1830.

**ALFRED DEAN TUBBS**,—became a member of the Church in 1850; became a regular physician; practiced in Williamstown, N. Y.; enlisted in the Navy, and not long afterward died of Yellow Fever at Cape Haytien, West Indies, aged thirty years.

**FRANK M. BYINGTON**,\*—a physician of eminent ability, and

---

\*Died, suddenly, in January, 1877.

growing popularity, for several years located at Fayetteville, N. Y., now pursuing his profession in Louisville, Kentucky.

Doctors Theron T. Hubbard of Saginaw, Michigan, and Edward T. Savage, of Minnesota, were members of the Sabbath-school.

In this category belong also the following lawyers:—

ELIAS P. BREWSTER,—who died in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1865, aged thirty-five years; Mason S. Brewster, of New York city; T. W. Skinner and A. F. Kellogg, of Mexico.

Also the following merchants:—Silas W. Brewster, of Hannibal, N. Y.; Williams Brothers, of New York City; Becker Brothers, sons of John Becker, Mexico; and the several Stone Brothers, long and favorably known as leading business men in Mexico.

Mention has been made of Amanda Brewster, niece of the Dr. and Judge Brewster, a young woman who taught the district school and organized a Sunday-school in 1814. Jonathan Davis, a nephew of Asa Davis, also a district school-teacher, from Massachusetts, was the first male superintendent. The School organized by Almeda Southworth and Maria Perkins, in the mill school-house, near the present site of the Toronto Mills, had a successful career; as had Mr. Dixon's Bible-class, which was well-sustained and useful, through his pastorate and that of Mr. Stowe.

In 1849-'50, Miss Maria Dewey, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a devoted Christian, taught a select school in Prattville, and mainly under her earnest labor a revival of religion occurred among the young people, the precious fruits of which commemorate her faithful zeal in the Christian lives of several who are now blessing the world.

The first singing-master from out of town was B. P. Barnes; and James Carpenter was chorister in the early meetings in Calvin Tiffany's house. In later years, Mr. Sizer, now of Syracuse, taught music on the hill; and many can remember the leadership of Joseph Slack, Dr. Warner and Shepard Emery, with their bass viols and flutes.

The history of the old Church would not be complete without a reference to Mrs. Kingsley, sister of the Brewsters, whose name is still fresh and fragrant in the memory of older persons in Mexico. She used to instruct and catechize the children in Mr. Dixon's absence. A letter received from her daughter, Mrs. Ely, is so full of interest that I cannot resist the temptation to give it a place in this sketch:—

MANTORVILLE, MINNESOTA, SEPTEMBER 3, 1876

"MR. BURGESS:—DEAR SIR:—In reply to your request in regard to the old Church of Prattville, I feel I cannot do justice to myself or to the information I would now give if I could talk with you. To the history of my good mother, her Christian life, her connection with the Prattville Church, and her precious memory, I cannot do justice. Of her joining the Church I have no recollection; but she must have been nearly one of the first members. She was born and educated in New England, and was of the Puritan stamp. She was a self-denying living Christian until her death; which occurred in Waupun, Wisconsin, eighteen years ago last Winter. Her age was almost seventy years. I cannot remember when the flame did not ascend from the family-altar, as well after my father's death as before. If strangers were present, she never faltered. I remember when she used to walk two miles to the female prayer-meeting at Deacon Root's. The influence of those dear friends—their prayers and admonitions, are still blessing many who are scattered in the world. The first Sunday-school was formed by mother's sister, who came and taught the district school one season, and organized a Sunday-school. She was one of the Brewster family of New England. Her name was Amanda Brewster, now Mrs. Judd, living in Ripon, Wisconsin; a devoted, useful woman. This was the first Sunday-school in our town. The first deacons I remember were Mr. Ephraim Gates and Mr. Daniel Locke, long since gone home. As regards the first members of that Church, I cannot say much. The families living there after my remembrance, were mostly good Christian people. Our minister, Mr. Dixon, a faithful father and friend, gone to reap his reward and secure his crown, was one of those tried and true servants whom God will own as his chosen and adopted. It was often said that more went out from that old Prattville Church to bless the world, (and many of them are now singing praises to God and the Lamb in the Church Triumphant,) than almost any other Church in those days. Some are now preaching the good news of salvation to a perishing world. Some have died on foreign shores who went as missionaries to proclaim Jesus to the benighted ones of earth. I well

remember the Summer of 1831, when God poured out his Spirit in large measure, and many were made to rejoice in His love ; and numbers were added to the Church, I could say almost daily, for a time. Those days will never be forgotten ;

"Happy days,  
When Jesus washed our sins away."

Few are left there now to tell the story of the past. But bless God, we shall soon all pass over the River, and when on the other side we shall meet loved ones and praise our God forever, where parting shall be no more.

Mr. Burgess, if you can gather any thing of interest to you from this I shall be glad. I always remember that old Prattville Church as my home, and I should be glad to see a sketch of it when finished.

PLEIADES BREWSTER ELY.

Mrs. Lydia Stone, who, with her husband, Isaac Stone, became members of the Church by letter in 1829, and went with the West Church in 1830, was a Christian woman of more than average holiness and heavenliness. She lived in widowhood after 1848, was an invalid many years, and yet she illustrated the mystery of grace by which even a sufferer may so trust God that

"Life shall all be sunshine,  
In the sweetness of the Lord."

After many lives had been made better by the hallowed power of her own, she passed to her rest, a few years since, in a good old age.

Mrs. Polly Norton, out of many names I would gladly produce here, must have a brief mention. She was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Frisbee; was born in Washington county; came to Vernon in 1808, to Prattville in 1814, and removed to Albion in 1818, carrying fire in a kettle. Her house, a log-cabin, was a kind of forest tavern, and was called the "Center House." It was also a mission station; and here, twelve miles deep in the woods, Rev. Henry Smith of Camden used to preach. It was a favorite stopping place for missionaries—Gillett, Brainard, and others. Mrs. Norton died in 1869, aged eighty-one years.

I cannot forbear to insert here the following memento of the original Church—the letter of experience which Sophronia Kellogg, who died in 1836, presented to the Church, on seeking admission to membership in 1813. Miss Kellogg, afterward wife of Luke Butterfield and mother of Mrs. S. H. Stone, was a timid girl of seventeen years, and Mr. Dixon, who had but just commenced labors with the Church, permitted her to give her experience in writing. This was the first “letter” of the kind presented to the Church. Its deep tone, the hatefulness of sin as it appeared to her penitent mind, and the thoroughness of God’s work of grace in her heart, explain the eminent spirituality of her after-life, and place her before us as a model of genuine conversion:—

“ Receiving a special call from God to turn from the error of my ways, unto Him, particularly from his Providence in visiting us with sickness, admonitions from the death-bed, and a consciousness that should the Lord come out in judgment against me, I should be made as miserable as I had made myself vile and sinful, I was convinced that my heart could not endure, nor my hands be made strong in the day that the Lord should deal with me. I was resolved to seek the favor of God, being persuaded there was no alternative but in Christ. I determined to seek Him and serve Him, if possibly the thoughts of my heart might be forgiven me. I desired to live no longer in the service of sin. I prayed to God that if it was consistent He would forgive me for the sake of His Son, Jesus; pleading his merits alone; being sensible that I myself deserved nothing but everlasting burning. Acknowledging his justice in casting me off forever, and that it was of his long-suffering mercy that I was spared, I desired to be made one of his meanest servants, if for the sake of his Son he would forgive me. Meditating upon my lost estate by nature, likewise the sufficiency there was in Christ, I beheld such a beauty and harmony in Him, that I was constrained to give glory to God. I desired to have His will done and not mine. I saw no beauty in anything short of the Divine perfections. I could thank God for his threatenings as well as promises, for if I was miserable I only wished to praise His name for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men. (I believe I preferred His glory to my happiness.) Since that time (which is about four months,) I have often desired to manifest my love to God by confessing Christ before men. (I leave you to judge whether I am a fit subject for baptism and the Lord’s Supper.) It is by faith alone we can be justified in the sight of God. Oh, that men would consider these

things before they are forever hid from them, and not for one morsel of carnal mirth, sell their immortal souls. My desire of uniting with the people of God is the idea that He has commanded it, and I esteem it a privilege to do whatever He is pleased in His wisdom to command. I likewise desire to have the eyes of the Church upon me, to watch over me and to admonish me, and to treat me as one liable to err, as one knowing that I am unworthy of the least of these mercies. But it has pleased God for Christ's sake to bestow these privileges, and feeling a delight in performing whatever He is pleased to command, I desire that you would examine me faithfully, conscious that you have to give an account to God for the same. If there are any that wish for further satisfaction, my sincere desire is that they would use freedom on the subject and watch over me with jealousy. If the question be asked, upon what consideration I felt this love to God and resignation to His will, I answer, it was upon the view of His love He exercised toward mankind, while yet in their sins, and his long-suffering mercy toward mankind, in that while they were yet enemies to Him, Christ died for the ungodly. Viewing this I perceived it must proceed from such infinite love that I sank into nothing before Him, and cried, Thy will be done, Oh, Father, and not mine. I desired and do desire to devote my life to His service.

SOPHRONIA KELLOGG.

*To the First Congregational Church in this place.*

MEXICO, AUGUST 29, 1813.

The records of the Church show that a large proportion of its members attained to an advanced age; and "Old Mrs. Fry," now living in Albion, one hundred and six years old, is of a family, several of whom were members of this Church.

Others have followed useful careers and reached honorable positions, whose records cannot be given here. The old church was never large, and, located in a rural population, could not have been. But probably, considering its numbers, it had more young men\* who acquired an academic and a collegiate edu-

---

\*In a letter from Mr. S. W. Brewster, of Hannibal, he says:—"When but nine years old I walked three miles morning and night, to a house west of the Academy, (while the first old academy was building,) that I might study Latin. I did this for the Summer. Then for eighteen months I went to Mr. Dixon's house, and studied with him, and then for one Summer walked to the academy. The next Winter we had a student from Hamilton College, in our district, so cousin Waite B. and myself read Latin there—I adding Greek. That Winter closed my work in that line,

cation, and rose to worthy distinction; more who became ministers of Christ; and more young women who attained to culture and worth, than can be shown to be true of the vast majority of country Churches. Fittingly does Mr. S. W. Brewster, in his letter to me say: "I am sad at the thought that so good a Society must die out. But there is pleasure in reflection that those trained there have helped to build up and sustain many other Churches." The old hive swarmed itself to death. The old tree died of over-bearing. Its life did not become extinct, after all; but it took upon itself new forms and went out upon wider missions. Its "lines have gone into all the earth, and its words to the end of the world."

The membership, from 1810 to 1830, when the West Church was formed, and in the East branch afterward, was in all, four hundred and twenty. Of those who were members at the time of the division, sixteen at least, are now living:—Mrs. Asenith Williams, Mrs. Allen Beebe, Mrs. M. A. Ball, Rev. L. Kellogg, Clark Beebe, Jabin Wood, Mrs. Jane Lyon, Susan Butterfield, Mr. and Mrs. Asa Beebe, Mrs. Robbins, Anson Gustin, Mrs. Nathaniel Slack, Mrs. M. P. Kellogg, Mrs. Mary Averill, Erastus M. Kellogg.

#### A P P E N D I X .

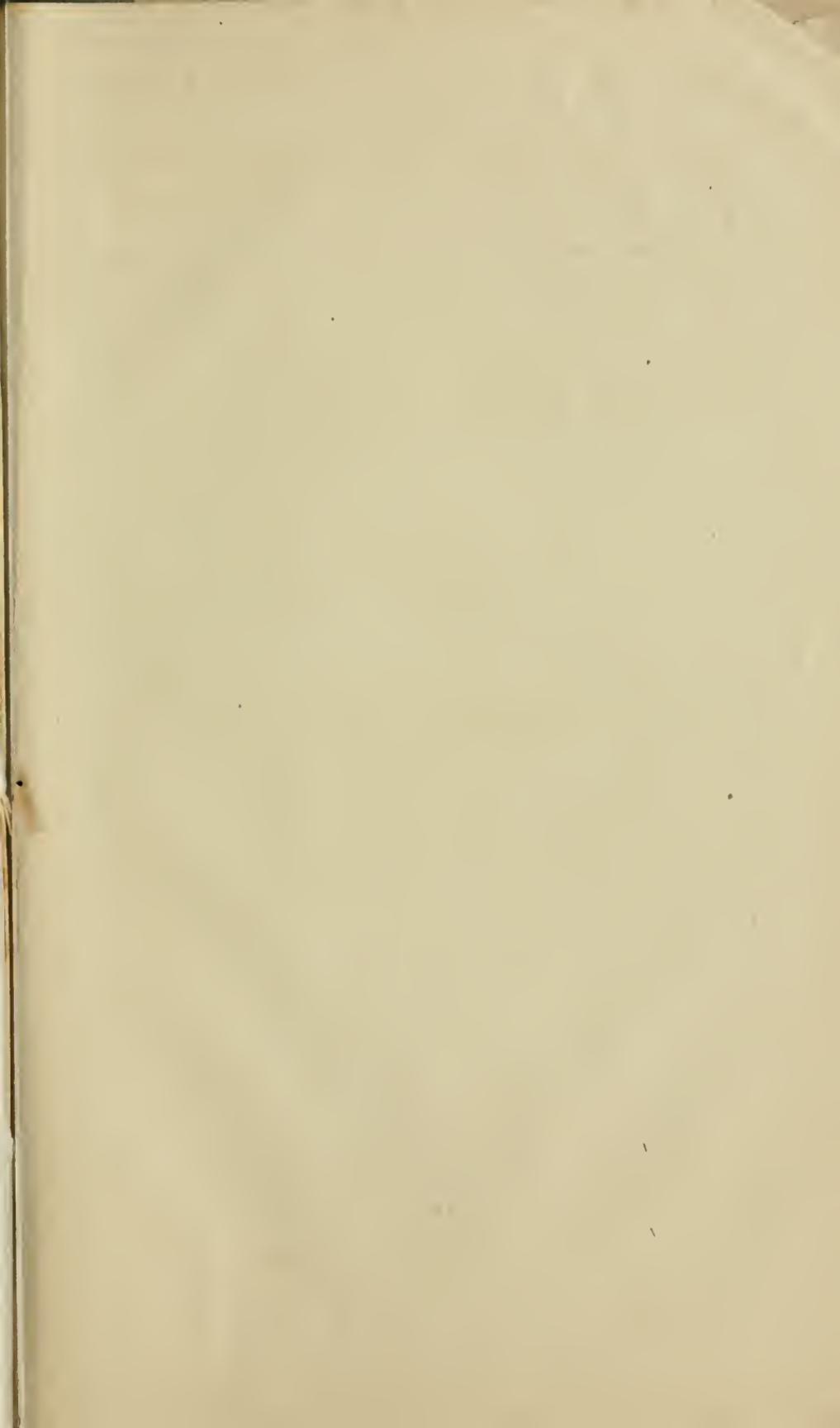
On the dissolution of the old Church, some of the remaining resident members, uniting with others of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, formed a Church under that Connection, in 1859. Mr. Burgess continued to supply the pulpit, till the Spring of 1865. During his pastorate the meeting-house was rebuilt,\* on the beautiful site formerly occupied by the residence

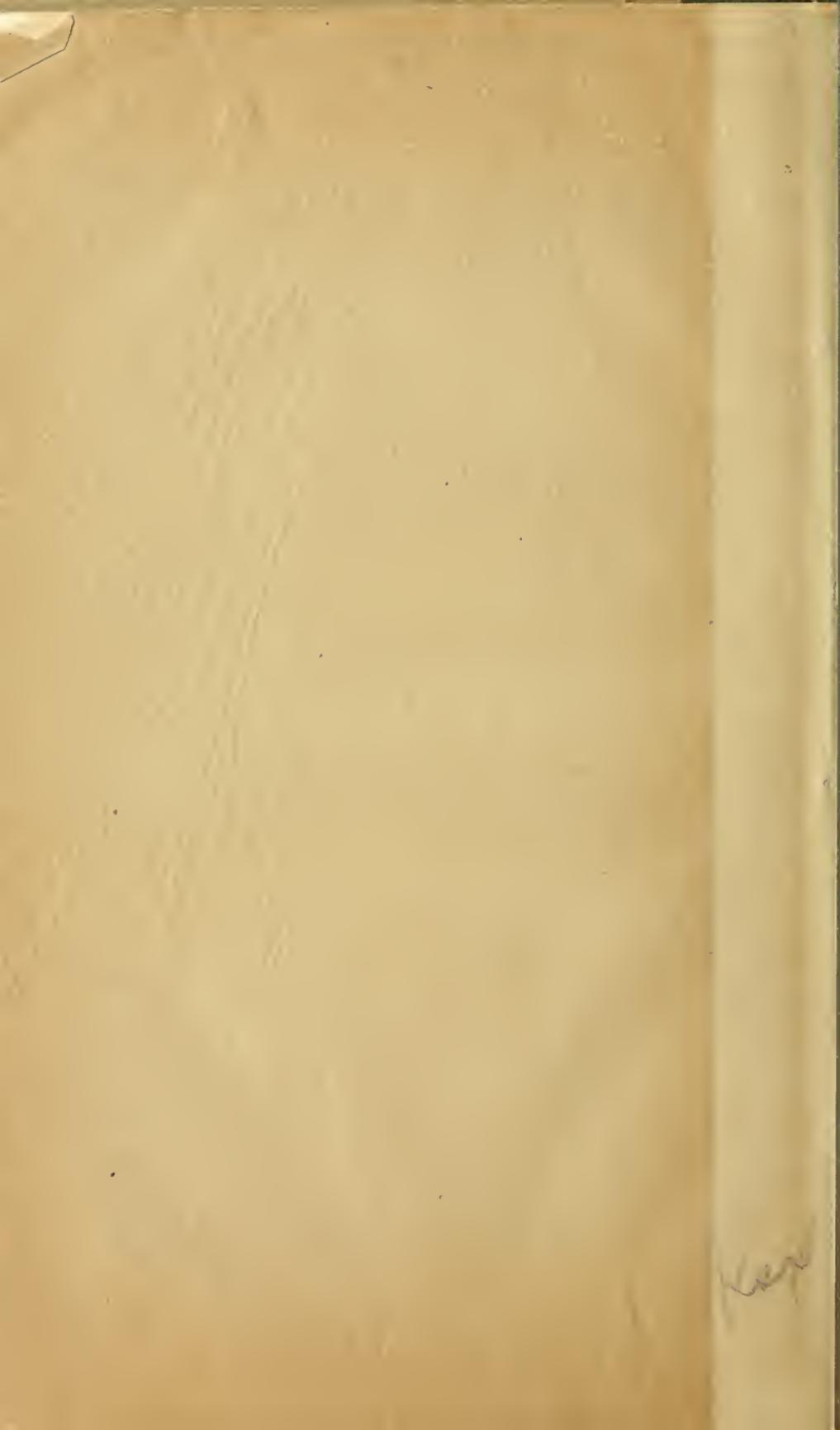
---

it being decided I had not health nor farther money to carry me through. So I graduated at twelve. But enough. Father's interest in my education, and Mr. Dixon's interest in the boys, shown by having me, and some of the time one and two others in his study, are, perhaps, things worthy of notice."

\*The spire of the old church was taken down the day that "Father Robinson," the last pastor, died; and the last service held in the church, was one for fasting and prayer, on the breaking out of the war.

of Dr. Brewster. Under his ministry several were added to the Church. In April, 1865, Rev. L. N. Stratton became the pastor, in which relation he served six years, his labors being attended with great public favor, and with prosperity and growth to the Church. He was succeeded by Rev. A. F. Dempsey, one year. Mr. Dempsey was followed by Rev. G. L. Payne, three years, and he, in turn by Rev. E. Barnetson, the present pastor. Mr. Payne left behind him many warm friends, and Mr. Barnetson is growingly useful and much esteemed.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 109 404 A

